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A SHORTER
BIBLE HISTORY
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT
FOR THE USE *of* CATHOLIC STUDENTS

By the REV. CHARLES HART, B.A.
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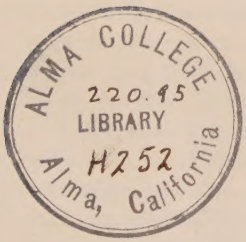

P. J. KENEDY AND SONS
44, BARCLAY STREET, NEW YORK

3261

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WESTMONASTERII,
23 *Decembris*, 1920.

First Impression, 1921
Second ,, 1925

Made and Printed in Great Britain

PREFACE

IN writing a *Shorter Bible History* the author has aimed chiefly at satisfying a need much felt by candidates for the teaching profession. From long experience gained in teaching he is of opinion, too, that the book is a suitable one to place in the hands of students in the junior classes of our colleges, in the middle forms of our secondary schools, and in the higher standards of our elementary schools. The general reader who wishes to revive his knowledge of Bible History, and who has neither the time nor the inclination to wade through more advanced works on the subject, may likewise find it of service.

Much care has been taken, while sketching the Old Testament history, to bring to the notice of the reader those types, figures, and prophecies which foreshadowed and foretold the realities to come, and which we see so strikingly verified when He, the desired of nations, made His appearance upon the earth. In the Old Testament, as St. Augustine points out, the New lies hidden, and in the New the Old lies open: hence that which is in very truth the sum of the New Testament—viz., Christ and His Church—is also the sum of the Old. It remains for us, then, to see how the picture of the Messias, so faithfully presented to us centuries before He appeared on earth by the ancient Prophets, who were separated from one another by long intervals of time and place, harmonises with that given by the inspired writers of the four Gospels, who either saw the Master Himself or heard of Him from His Apostles.

The chapters have designedly been made short so that each story or fact may stand out prominently, and that the picture and its setting may be clearly and easily grasped. To make the work more valuable from the student's point of view, three carefully drawn maps have been inserted.

Owing to the uncertainty which must ever attach to Biblical Chronology, the chronological system of Archbishop Ussher has been adhered to, but only from " The Call of Abraham," as from this point onwards the dates are more reliable. None of the dates assigned by scholars to the earlier periods of Bible History can be considered as more than approximate; yet they serve a useful purpose

in showing the sequence and relative position of events. Ussher's system has been kept, not because it has been judged nearest the truth, as it allows too short an interval between the creation of Adam and the birth of Christ, but because it has long been the commonly received system; and it is desirable and useful, too, that, in point of chronology, the work should be in harmony with the generality of Bible Histories.

St. Cuthbert's Grammar School,
Newcastle-on-Tyne,
Christmas, 1920.

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INTRODUCTORY

THE BIBLE

ONE of the principal means whereby God has made known Divine Truth to mankind is by the Sacred Scriptures. These consist of a number of documents, written by different persons, at different times, and under different circumstances. Gathered together, they form what we call the Bible (Gr. *Ta Biblia*, "The Books"); and, as they are proposed to us by the Church as being the Word of God, they thus bear the stamp of Divine authority.

The Bible consists of two main divisions, the Old Testament, or Covenant, and the New; and although they are unconnected as far as *human* design is concerned—being separated by an interval of well-nigh two centuries—the Old contains the germ and nucleus of the New, while the New contains the realisation and fulfilment of the Old; hence, that which is in very truth the sum of the New Testament—viz., Christ and His Church—is also the sum of the Old.

I.—BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Grouped into classes according to the nature of their subject matter, the Books of the Old Testament are:

(*a*) The *Pentateuch* (Gr. *pente*, five, and *teuchos*, a book), or the *five* BOOKS OF THE LAW, written by Moses. They are *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy*.

(*b*) The *sixteen* HISTORICAL BOOKS:

Josue.
Judges.
Ruth.
1 Kings (*or* 1 Samuel).
2 Kings (*or* 2 Samuel).
3 Kings (*or* 1 Kings).
4 Kings (*or* 2 Kings).
1 Paralipomenon (*or* 1 Chronicles).
2 Paralipomenon (*or* 2 Chronicles).
1 Esdras.
2 Esdras (*or* Nehemias).
Tobias.
Judith.
Esther.
1 Machabees.
2 Machabees.

(*c*) The *seven* POETICAL BOOKS, or HOLY WRITINGS, also called HAGIOGRAPHA (Gr. *hagios*, holy, and *grapho*, I write):

Job.
The Psalms.
Proverbs.
Ecclesiastes.
Solomon's Canticle of Canticles.
Wisdom.
Ecclesiasticus.

These *five* are also called SAPIENTIAL BOOKS, because they contain instructions how to direct our lives by the dictates of sound reason.

(*d*) The PROPHETS, or the *eighteen* PROPHETICAL BOOKS, which are further divided into those of the *Four Greater Prophets* and those of the *Twelve Minor* or *Lesser Prophets*.

THE FOUR GREATER PROPHETS.

Isaias, Jeremias (who also wrote the *Lamentations*), Ezechiel, and Daniel.

THE TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS.

Osee.
Joel.
Amos.
Abdias.
Jonas.
Micheas.
Nahum.
Habacuc.
Sophonias.
Aggeus.
Zacharias.
Malachias.

(The *Prophecy of Baruch* was considered to be a part of the Prophecy of Jeremias, and was usually quoted under his name.)

APOCRYPHAL BOOKS as distinguished from CANONICAL BOOKS:

Certain Books, whose authenticity as inspired writings is not admitted by the Church, are called *apocryphal* (apocrypha, *things hidden, obscure ;* Gr. *apocrypto*, I hide), and are not included in the canon (Gr. *kanon*, rule) put forth by the Council of Trent (A.D. 1546). Among these may be mentioned the *Third and Fourth Book of Esdras*, the *Third and Fourth Book of Machabees*, and the *Prayer of King Manasses*.

Under the same category Protestants also class the Books of *Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Machabees*, and parts of *Esther* and *Daniel*.

II.—BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The writings of the New Testament are of four kinds: (1) *The Gospels* according to SS. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; (2) *The Acts of the Apostles*, written by St. Luke; (3) *The Epistles* of St.

Paul, St. James, St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude; and (4) *The Apocalypse* of St. John.

The Gospels and the Acts are *historical*, the Epistles *moral*, and the Apocalypse, or Revelation of St. John, *prophetical*. Of the Epistles, fourteen were written on particular occasions by St. Paul, ten of them being addressed to different Churches, and four to individuals. The Epistles of SS. James, Peter, John, and Jude are called *Catholic Epistles* because they are addressed to all Christians in general, if we except the second and third Epistles of St. John.

LANGUAGE AND VERSIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES

All the Books of the *Old Testament* were originally written in *Hebrew*, with but few exceptions. *Wisdom* and the *Second Book of Machabees* were written in *Greek ;* while others, or parts of them, were written in *Aramaic*, the more modern language of the Ancient Jews after their return from captivity.

The Books of the *New Testament* were all originally written in Greek—then the language of the civilised world—except perhaps the *Gospel of St. Matthew* and the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, which, being mainly written for the Jewish converts, were probably first written in Hebrew or Aramaic.

THE SEPTUAGINT

The *Septuagint*, or *LXX. version* (Lat. *septuaginta*, seventy), also called the *Alexandrine* version, is the most eminent Greek translation of the Old Testament that has come down to us, and is the one that was commonly in use among the Jews at the time of Christ. It was so called because it was approved by the Sanhedrim, or supreme council of the Jewish nation, which consisted of about seventy members. There is a tradition that it was so called because it was the work of seventy or seventy-two learned Jews of Alexandria, who, at the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus (283-247 B.C.), assembled on the island of Pharos, and, with the sanction of the High Priest, Eleazar, made the translation for the great library at Alexandria.

THE ITALIC VERSION

It was from the Septuagint translation that the many early Latin translations were made, among them being the famous *Versio Itala*, or *Italic* version. The *Itala* dated probably from the middle of the second century, and remained in general use down to the time of St. Jerome.

THE VULGATE

The *Vulgate* (Lat. *versio vulgata*, common or usual version) is the name of the Latin translation of the Bible which alone is the received version of the Catholic Church, and which the Council of Trent (May 27, 1546) declared was to be held authentic. The *Itala* had received so many alterations in the text that Pope Damasus I. caused a careful revision to be made by St. Jerome. This learned saint (d. A.D. 420) revised the New Testament and the Psalms, and made a new translation of most of the Books of the Old Testament from the Hebrew or Aramaic. The Church speaks of St. Jerome as "the greatest doctor, divinely raised up to interpret the Sacred Scriptures."

In the course of centuries changes of translation and other alterations had entered into the *Vulgate* as they had previously entered into the *Itala*; hence the Council of Trent decreed that the Latin text should be definitely fixed. This was effected by the edition published under Clement VIII. in 1592, which, reprinted with corrections in 1593 and 1598, has since remained the normal edition of the Catholic Church.

THE DOUAI VERSION

The translations commonly used among English-speaking Catholics are revisions of one originally made from the Vulgate by divines connected with the English College at Douai.

Under the auspices of Dr. William Allen (afterwards Cardinal), a society was formed in 1568 for the translation of the Sacred Scriptures into our own tongue. The Latin Vulgate was rendered into English by Dr. Gregory Martin, the New Testament, with the notes of Dr. Richard Bristow and Dr. Allen, being published at Rheims in 1582. The Old Testament, the notes of which were by Dr. Thomas Worthington, was published at Douai in 1610. The whole was revised by Dr. Richard Challoner in 1750-52.

INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

The claim of the Books of the Bible to be received as God's Word rests upon the fact of their *inspiration*, by which is meant a certain supernatural impulse of the Divine Spirit upon the mind and will of a human writer, moving him to write down those things which God wishes him to write, and so acting upon him (determining his

will and illuminating his mind, imagination, and memory) while he writes, that he avoids all error, and his writing is truly the Word of God.

No one can draw an accurate likeness of a man who is not yet in existence. God, and God alone, sees the distant future. He, and He alone, can paint a true portrait of one who is to be, but who is not yet made. God knows and sees all things. In fact, all invisible things are to Him not invisible, but stand out clear before Him. Hence, when we find the various prophets, separated by long intervals of time and space, drawing, in inspired words, the portrait of Christ, whom they never saw, and when we further note, as soon as Christ appears and manifests Himself, that the portrait is a true one and an accurate one, we know that God must have shown them the Original, and have described for them the Divine Person of Christ. Now, they succeeded in drawing this marvellous picture of the Man Jesus centuries before He appeared on earth; and as *they* could not possibly see Him or watch His actions before "He was made flesh and dwelt amongst us," the conclusion is forced upon us that they must have been in communication with One who could and did see and know all from the very first—*i.e.*, they must have written what they did under the direct inspiration of an Omniscient Being; and that Being can be no other than Almighty God. So admirably does one writer supplement what is said by others, that we cannot but feel persuaded that one and the same Spirit was illuminating them all, and that each had before the eyes of his mind the selfsame Christ and Redeemer. When we read accurate and minute descriptions of events written a thousand years before they come to pass, it is impossible to doubt that God is the Author of such descriptions.

It is necessary, however, that we should have some means of knowing what Books are really inspired, and to be treated as Scripture. The only witness we have to the fact of inspiration is the infallible Church, which gives us the Canon of Scripture, or that Catalogue of Books (as given above) which are to be thus accepted. Of certain Books there was never at any time a doubt as to their inspiration, and they were at once accepted as of Divine origin; these are called the *Protocanonical* Books (*i.e.*, Books of the *first canon ;* Gr. *protos*, first). As to others, there was some hesitation for a time in making sure of their being inspired writings; but when the fact was finally acknowledged, they also took their rightful place in the canon. These are called the *Deuterocanonical* Books (Gr. *deuteros*, second). It must not be thought that these latter are any whit less authoritative than the others: the distinction refers only

to the *order of time* in which the *fact* of their inspiration was perceived and acknowledged.

Among the Jews the Pentateuch was certainly regarded as the nucleus of their Sacred Writings. These Books were treated with the greatest reverence, and placed in the side of the Ark of the Covenant (Deut. xxxi. 25). To them were gradually added other works, considered as being of equal authority with them, notably the writings of the Prophets; hence the frequent references made to "the Law and the Prophets." The Hebrew Canon contains those Books of the Old Testament which we call protocanonical. But the Hellenistic Jews (*i.e.*, those scattered throughout Greek-speaking countries) possessed the Greek translation of the Scriptures, called the Septuagint, in which are found all the Books of the Old Testament which are acknowledged by the Catholic Church. The Septuagint Version was the one nearly always quoted by Our Lord and the Apostles.

With regard to the Canon of the New Testament the question was simpler than in the case of the Old. The test applied to any writing was this: Was its Divine character attested by Apostolic authority? Once this fact was assured, the Book was treated as inspired Scripture: if there was a doubt on the point for a time, it was not accepted until definite evidence was procured. Then it was either added to the canon, or rejected from it if it could not be shown to possess Apostolic authority. Although it might continue to be read for edification and instruction, a sharp line of distinction was drawn between the writings attested by the Apostles and other books, however valuable in their contents, which lacked that authority. The reason of this is that the deposit of public revelation was complete in the time of the Apostles. They alone had the mission to give to the teaching of Christ the development which was to be opportunely suggested to them by the Paraclete (John xiv. 26).

THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Genesis, a Greek word meaning BIRTH, *is the first of the five Books of Moses* (THE PENTATEUCH), *and treats of the generation, or of the creation and the beginning of the world. It gives us the progress of events from the creation of man to the death of Joseph,* B.C. 1635.

PART I

FROM THE CREATION TO THE CALL OF ABRAHAM, B.C. 1921

CHAPTER I

THE CREATION

GENESIS opens with this simple statement, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth," which teaches us that God was the first cause of the whole universe of heaven and earth and of all things that belong to them. He created heaven with all its angels, and the whole mass of the elements. At first these elements were in a state of confusion and blended together; but, at the word of God, there arose out of them in the space of six days, or *six indefinite periods of time,* the wonderful order which we now behold.

It must be clearly borne in mind that the Book of Genesis assigns no date for the epoch of Creation, and that the six creative days mentioned in Scripture, or the successive steps by which heaven and earth rose out of chaos, are not to be understood as six days of twenty-four hours each, but are rather to be regarded as six periods of indefinitely long duration, this use of the word "day" being of frequent occurrence in the Bible. Indeed, the sun, which is the actual measure of the solar day, was only formed on the fourth day.

The purpose of the writer of Genesis was to bring home to the Jews the great fact of the creation of the world and of all that was in it, to guard them against the danger of idolatrous worship of the heavenly bodies or the animal creation, and to lead them to honour the Sabbath day. Nor can it be said that science or modern discoveries are in any way opposed to the great outlines of the Mosaic account of the origin of the world.

The earth, we are told, was at first void and empty; its materials

were without order; and those countless objects which we now see upon its surface had not as yet appeared. Darkness, too, was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved over the waters. And God said: "Let there be light"; and light was made. He divided the light from the darkness, and called the light *day* and the darkness *night*. This was the work of the *first day*.

On the *second day* God made the firmament, and called it *heaven*.

On the *third day* He separated the dry land from the waters, and called the dry land *earth* and the waters *seas*. On this day also He commanded the earth to bring forth the green herb, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit according to its kind.

On the *fourth day* God said: "Let there be lights made in the firmament of heaven to divide the day and the night: and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years." Thus were created the sun, the moon, and the stars.

On the *fifth day* He made the fishes of the sea and the birds of the air; and He blessed them, saying: "Increase and multiply, and fill the waters of the sea; and let the birds be multiplied on the earth."

On the *sixth day* God commanded the earth to produce cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth according to their kinds; and so it was done.

On this day also He created man, the last, and, after the angels, the most perfect of all His works; for man alone upon the earth was capable of knowing and loving his Creator. "Let Us make man," He said, "according to Our own image and likeness; and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth." Then the Lord God formed the body of man out of the slime of the earth, and breathed into him an immortal soul.

Seeing that all the things that He had made were *very good*, God ended His work, and rested on the seventh day. This, the Sabbath day, He blessed and sanctified; for which reason He commanded the Jews to keep it holy, thus doubtless renewing a command that had existed from the beginning (Gen. i., ii).

CHAPTER II

THE GARDEN OF PARADISE—EVE

For the abode of the first man, Adam, God planted a Paradise of pleasure, a garden abounding with delights, and furnished with various kinds of trees the fruit of which was pleasant to eat and fair to look upon. In the midst of this garden grew two trees, one the Tree of Life, the other the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

God commanded Adam to dress the garden and to keep it, and at the same time made trial of his fidelity and obedience by imposing upon him one only restraint. "Thou mayest eat," He said, "of the fruit of every tree in Paradise, but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil thou shalt not eat; for in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death." If Adam had but con-

tinued faithful to this command, his children would have been born in the state of innocence, and, like himself, would have been happy and immortal, free from all sickness and pain, and destined in due time to be translated to a happier Paradise.

God brought before Adam the beasts of the earth and the fowls of the air to see what he would call them; for whatsoever Adam called any living creature, the same is its name. Hence it would seem that God had endowed him with the power of speech even from his creation.

But for Adam there was not found a helper gifted like himself with reason, one with whom he might converse. Then God cast him into a deep sleep, and took out one of his ribs and filled up the place with flesh. This rib God formed into a woman and brought her to Adam. When Adam saw her on awaking, he exclaimed: "This is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh." Adam called his wife *Eve*, a word which signifies *the mother of all the living*.

Thus, in the Garden of Paradise, God instituted the ordinance of marriage, which was afterwards raised by Jesus Christ Himself to the dignity of a Sacrament (Gen. ii.).

The Garden of Paradise furnishes us with a type of heaven, that happier Paradise, that blissful state of rest, joy and peace everlasting: "To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God" (Apoc. ii. 7).

CHAPTER III

MAN'S TRIAL AND FALL

The devil was filled with envy and malice at seeing Adam and Eve, whose humble origin was from the slime of the earth, living happily in their obedience to the commands of God. He therefore assumed the form of a serpent, the most crafty and wily of all animals, and thus addressed Eve: "Why hath God commanded that you should not eat of every tree in Paradise?" Eve replied: "Of the fruit of the trees that are in Paradise we do eat; but of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge which is in the midst of Paradise, God hath commanded us that we should not eat, and that we should not touch it lest perhaps we die."

The serpent said to her: "No, you shall not die; for God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Eve listened to the deceitful words of the devil; and seeing that the fruit was fair to the eyes, she gazed on it with desire, then took thereof, and ate, and gave to her husband, who also ate. Thus did sin come into the world.

No sooner had Adam and Eve eaten of the forbidden fruit than

they began to be overwhelmed with shame, and girded themselves with fig-leaves which they sewed together. Oh, the change! What before had been their greatest joy, now filled them with alarm, and caused them to tremble with fear. Hearing the voice of the Lord they hid themselves from His face amidst the trees of Paradise.

God called Adam and said to him: "Where art thou?" Adam answered: "I heard Thy voice in Paradise, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself." God said to him: "Who told thee that thou wast naked, but that thou hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" Adam replied: "The woman whom Thou gavest me to be my companion gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

God said to the woman: "Why hast thou done this?" Eve answered: "The serpent deceived me, and I did eat."

To the serpent God said: "Because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed among all the beasts of the earth. Upon thy breast shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."

To Eve He said: "I will multiply thy sorrows: in sorrow thou shalt bring forth thy children, and thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee."

To Adam He said: "Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, cursed is the earth in thy work; with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and in the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken, for dust thou art and into dust thou shalt return."

And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skins, and clothed them; and He said: "Behold Adam is become as one of Us, knowing good and evil." He then cast them out of Paradise, and placed at the entrance an angel with a fiery sword, lest they should return and eat of the fruit of the tree that grew in the midst of Paradise, the Tree of Life, and live for ever" (Gen. ii., iii.).

In the words, "I will put enmities between thee and the woman," etc., uttered by Almighty God, we have the *first promise* of a Redeemer to come. It was by her seed, Jesus Christ, that the woman was to crush the serpent's head, since it was by His Passion and Death that the power of the devil was destined to be broken.

In Adam we see a figure of Jesus Christ, whom St. Paul calls the second or last Adam (1 Cor. xv. 45), but a figure rather by *contraries*. The first Adam brought sin and death into the world, the second, grace and life; the first brought condemnation, the second, salvation and glory. The body of Adam was formed out of the slime of the earth, Christ was born of an immaculate Virgin. The Fathers tell us that the Church, the spouse of Christ and mother of all the faithful, was taken out of His side while He was sleeping on the

Cross, as Eve, the mother of all the living, was taken from Adam's side.

In like manner—*i.e.*, by way of contraries—Eve is a figure of our Blessed Lady. Through Eve we have all derived our bodily or natural life, through Mary our spiritual or supernatural life. Eve, through her disobedience, sinned and was punished; Mary, by reason of her obedience and lively faith, gave glory to God, and by all generations is declared blessed.

CHAPTER IV

CAIN AND ABEL—SETH

In course of time Adam and Eve had two sons: Cain, who became a husbandman or a tiller of the ground, and Abel, who chose the life of a shepherd. Cain was of a jealous temper and naturally rough and violent, while Abel was meek and gentle and took a delight in tending his flocks.

Both offered sacrifice to God, Cain of the fruits of the earth, Abel of the firstlings of his flock; but, owing to the different dispositions in which they made their offerings, the sacrifices of Abel were accepted by God, while those of Cain were rejected. This roused Cain's jealousy; and filled with grief, he became downcast, and began to entertain a violent hatred against his brother. But God saw the evil passions of his heart, and said to him: "Why art thou angry, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou do well, shalt thou not receive; but if ill, shall not sin forthwith be present at the door?"

But Cain allowed his hatred to get complete mastery over him, and, pretending friendship for his brother, he one day invited him to walk with him into the fields, and there he fell upon him and slew him.

When God asked him what had become of his brother, he boldly replied: "I know not: am I my brother's keeper?" But God said to him: "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to Me from the earth. Now, therefore, cursed shalt thou be upon the earth, which hath received the blood of thy brother at thy hand. When thou shalt till it, it shall not yield to thee its fruit: a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be upon the earth."

Despairing of forgiveness, Cain exclaimed: "My iniquity is too great to deserve pardon; everyone, therefore, that findeth me shall kill me."

God said to him: "No, it shall not be so; but whosoever shall kill Cain shall be punished sevenfold." And He set a mark upon him, that whosoever found him should not kill him. Cain then went forth a fugitive, and dwelt on the east side of Eden. His descendants are mentioned in Scripture to the sixth generation.

Of the many sons and daughters that were born to Adam and Eve, only one other is mentioned by name. This was Seth, whose descendants, on account of their religion and piety, are styled in Scripture the *sons of God*; whereas those of Cain, by reason of their wickedness, are spoken of as the *children of men*.

One of the most celebrated of Seth's descendants was *Henoch* whom God took and translated to the unseen world without his undergoing death, a privilege shared by Elias alone of all the human race. Another, Methusala, lived to the advanced age of 969 years (Gen. iv., v.).

Abel's violent death at the hands of his brother was a figure of the death of Jesus Christ, who for a like cause was slain by His own people. Cain, for his crime, became separated from the Church as it then existed, and the Jews were cut off and remained no longer God's chosen people. Like Cain, too, the Jews became wanderers on the face of the earth.

The sacrifice which Abel offered was a type of the great sacrifice of the New Law. "You are come to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament, and to the sprinkling of blood, which speaketh better than that of Abel" (Heb. xii. 24).

CHAPTER V

THE DELUGE

In time it came to pass that the descendants of Seth began to marry with the women of the race of Cain, and the world became so corrupt that God, "being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart, said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; from man even to beasts; from the creeping thing even to the fowls of the air."

One man, however, Noe, the son of Lamech, found grace before the Lord. He was just and perfect among the men of his generation, and walked in the presence of God. Now to him, as well as to his three sons, Sem, Cham, and Japheth, and their wives, the Lord showed mercy, being unwilling to punish the innocent with the guilty.

It was to this just man that God made known His resolve to destroy the world by a deluge; and wishing to save him and his family from the general destruction, He commanded him to build an ark or vessel "which might contain his own family, and such a number of animals of every species as might replenish the earth after the deluge."

God said to him: "Make thee an ark of timber planks: thou shalt make little rooms in the ark, and thou shalt pitch it within and without. The length of the ark shall be 300 cubits,* its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. Thou shalt make a window in the ark, and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side: with lower, middle chambers, and third storeys shalt thou make it. And I will establish My covenant with thee, and thou shalt enter into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and the wives of thy sons with thee."

The building of the ark took Noe 120 years, during which time he preached repentance to his fellow-men, and warned them again and again of the destruction that was about to befall them. Yet men set his warnings at naught, and only scoffed when they saw the

* A cubit = 1½ feet.

preparations he was making. " They did eat and drink, they married wives and were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the Ark and the flood came and destroyed them all " (Luke xvii. 27).

When the ark was finished, and the time fixed by Almighty God for purifying the earth was come, on the tenth day of the second month of the six hundredth year of Noe's life, he and his family went into the ark, taking with them all kinds of birds, beasts, and reptiles by pairs; but of clean animals, or animals fit for sacrifice, they took seven of each kind as God had commanded. They took seven days to enter the ark, and then God fastened close the door on the outside.

After the seven days were passed that it took to enter the ark, the waters of the flood began to overflow the earth; the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the flood-gates of heaven were opened. The rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights, and the increasing waters lifted up the ark on high from the earth. They overflowed exceedingly, and the ark was borne upon the flood. All the high mountains under heaven were covered, and the water was fifteen cubits higher than their highest peaks. All flesh was destroyed that moved upon the earth, of fowl and of cattle, of beasts, and of all creeping things, and all mankind. All things on the earth wherein there was the breath of life died: Noe alone remained, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth 150 days (Gen. vi., vii).

The ark was a figure of the Church of God, in which alone is salvation to be found. She is the safe refuge to which all must have recourse who wish to be saved. As well might one have hoped to be saved outside the ark as to expect salvation outside the Church of God.

The deluge itself was a figure of Christian baptism. " In the ark eight souls were saved *by water ;* whereunto baptism, being of the like form, now saveth you also " (1 Pet. iii. 20, 21).

CHAPTER VI

NOE LEAVES THE ARK—GOD'S COVENANT

MEANWHILE God remembered Noe and all that were with him in the ark. After 150 days the waters began to abate until the ark rested upon the top of Mount Ararat in Armenia. Noe still waited forty days before he opened the window of the ark, and then he sent forth a raven, which returned no more to him. He next sent a dove, but she, not finding where her foot might rest, returned to him in the ark. After seven days he again sent forth the dove, and she returned in the evening with a green olive-branch in her beak, a sign that the lower trees were now uncovered. After waiting yet another seven days, he once more sent her forth; but finding that she did not return, he understood that the waters had finally subsided. Noe, however, did not yet leave the ark.

At length came the command of God: " Go out of the ark, thou, and thy wife, thy sons, and the wives of thy sons, and all living things that are with thee." In all they had been in the ark a year and ten days.

No sooner had Noe left the ark than, to show his gratitude to God, he erected an altar, and taking of all cattle and fowls that were clean, he offered sacrifice. This act of piety was so pleasing to God that He promised never again to curse the earth on account of the sins of men. He then blessed Noe and his sons, and bade them increase and multiply and fill the earth. He also gave them power over all living creatures, with permission to use their flesh as food, but forbade the eating of flesh with the blood. On this occasion also God enacted a new law against murder, in which He gave to judges the power to punish murder with death: " Whosoever shall shed man's blood, his blood shall be shed; for man was made to the image of God."

God, moreover, made a covenant, or solemn agreement, with Noe, in which He confirmed His promise never again to destroy the world by a flood. " This is the sign of the covenant," He said, " which I give between Me and you. I will set My bow in the clouds, and it shall be the sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. And when My bow shall appear in the clouds, I will remember My covenant with you, and there shall no more be waters of a flood to destroy all flesh."

Soon after Noe had left the ark, he began to till the ground, and planted a vineyard; and drinking too freely of the wine, without knowing its strength, he fell asleep and lay uncovered in the middle of his tent. Cham, the father of Chanaan, was the first to see his father in this condition, and spoke jestingly of it to his two brethren without. They, however, put a cloak upon their shoulders, and going backwards and turning away their faces, covered their father's nakedness.

When Noe awoke and knew what Cham had done, he pronounced a curse upon him in the person of his son, saying: " Cursed be Chanaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren." But he blessed Sem and Japheth for their piety.

Noe died at the age of 950 years, having lived 350 years after the deluge (Gen. viii., ix.).

The ignominy and desolate condition of Christ upon the Cross was prefigured in the drunkenness and nakedness of Noe. Cham scoffed at his father and was cursed; Sem and Japheth covered their father and were blessed. So, too, the Jews mocked at the humiliation of Christ as He hung upon the Cross, and God's curse was swift to overtake them. But the converts among the Jews, and the Gentiles who embraced the faith, having compassion on their suffering Lord, turned their gaze away from His shame and were filled with blessings.

CHAPTER VII

THE TOWER OF BABEL

At first the descendants of Noe inhabited the high table-land of Armenia; but at length, moving southward, they came to a rich plain in the land of Sennaar, and there they dwelt.

Unable to live together any longer on account of their numbers, they said to one another: "Come, let us make a city and a tower the top of which may reach to heaven; and let us make our name famous before we be scattered abroad into all lands." Accordingly they set about their work with great zeal, using bricks in place of stones, and slime or bitumen in place of mortar.

But God thwarted their vain and foolish design, and made use of their very folly to carry out His purpose of dispersing them abroad that they might spread over the whole earth. "Behold," He said, "it is one people, and all have one tongue. Come, therefore, let Us go down and there confound their tongue that they may not understand one another's speech."

So great was the confusion which followed that they were compelled to desist from their undertaking, and the city which they had begun to build received the name of *Babel* or *Confusion*, because there the language of the whole earth was confounded. Thus the Lord dispersed them from that place into all the countries of the world. This event took place about a century after the deluge.

We read of Nemrod, the son of Chus, a grandson of Cham, that he was a mighty hunter. He also became a famous conqueror of men, and, on the plains of Sennaar, established a great empire whose capital was Babylon (Gen. x., xi.).

PART II

FROM THE CALL OF ABRAHAM TO THE DELIVERY OF THE HEBREWS FROM THE EGYPTIAN BONDAGE

B.C. 1921 TO B.C. 1491

CHAPTER VIII

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM, B.C. 1921

WITH the Call of Abraham began a new dispensation. The time had now come when God made choice of a *family* which was to preserve the knowledge and the worship of the true God, and from which the promised Redeemer was to spring. Faith, too, in the promise, was at once typified and guarded by the Covenant of Circumcision.

The man on whom God fixed His choice was Abraham, or, as he was at first called, Abram, the son of Thare. Thare lived in Ur, a city of the Chaldees, in Mesopotamia, and had three sons, Abram, Nachor, and Aran who was the father of Lot. This favoured family went into the land of Chanaan, and finally settled in Haran, where Thare died.

While Abram was yet in Ur, the Lord said to him: "Go forth out of thy country, and out of thy father's house, and come into the land which I shall show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation. I will bless thee, and magnify thy name. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and *in thee* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

In obedience to God's command, Abram left Haran, taking with him his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot. He pitched his tents in the neighbourhood of Sichem, and there built an altar to the Lord. Here God again appeared to him and said: "To thy seed will I give this land."

From Sichem Abram removed to the country east of Bethel, and between Bethel and Hai built a second altar to the Lord. He then continued to journey southward; but soon after this, owing to a famine breaking out in the land, he was compelled for a time to go down into Egypt.

As he drew near to the land of the Pharaos, he said to his wife: "I know that thou art a beautiful woman; and that when the Egyptians shall see thee, they will say: She is his wife; and they will kill me and keep thee. Say, therefore, I pray thee, that thou art my sister."

The Egyptians, struck with Sarai's beauty, praised her to Pharao, who at once sent for her and took her to his palace with the intention of taking her as his wife. At the same time he loaded Abram with presents.

Warned, however, by plagues which God sent upon him and his household, Pharao was made to understand the wrong he had done, and that the woman was indeed the wife of Abram. Sending for Abram, he said to him: "What is this that thou hast done to me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife, and not thy sister? Now, therefore, there is thy wife; take her, and go thy way." He then gave orders to his servants to conduct Abram and his wife, and all that he possessed, to the very borders of his kingdom.

On leaving Egypt, Abram returned by the way he had come, and again took up his abode between Bethel and Hai.

Here there arose a dispute between the herdsmen of Abram and those of Lot. Abram was very rich in flocks and in gold and in silver. Lot also, who had accompanied Abram in all his wanderings, possessed flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. And now, owing to the great increase in their stock, the place in which they dwelt did not afford sufficient pasturage, and they must needs separate.

Abram said to Lot: "Let there be no quarrel I beseech thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren. Behold the whole land is before thee. If thou wilt go to the left hand, I will take the right; if thou choose the right hand, I will pass to the left."

Looking around him, Lot saw all the country about the Jordan, watered throughout as the paradise of the Lord. Pleased with the prospect, he left his uncle in the land of Chanaan, and settled in the town of Sodom.

After Lot had taken his departure, God renewed his promise to Abram saying: "Lift up thy eyes, and look to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west. All the land which thou seest I will give to thee and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: if any man shall be able to number the dust of the earth, he shall be able to number thy seed also."

After this Abram went southward and dwelt in the vale of Mambre, near Hebron; and he built there a third altar to the Lord (Gen. xii., xiii.).

CHAPTER IX

ABRAM RESCUES LOT

Soon after Lot had settled in Sodom, the King of the Elamites, accompanied by three allied kings, marched against the kings of Sodom and Gomorrha and their allies, and encountered them in a woodland vale which now is the Salt Sea (*Dead Sea*). The four kings took and pillaged Sodom and Gomorrha, and carried off Lot and all the inhabitants prisoners.

News of this disaster had no sooner been brought to Abram by one who had escaped from the field of battle than he armed his servants to the number of three hundred and eighteen, and with his Amorrhite allies sallied forth from Mambre in pursuit of the victorious kings. He divided his army into several companies, and falling

upon the unsuspecting foe, he defeated them and pursued them as far as Hoba. Lot and all the others prisoners were rescued, and all the booty was recovered.

On his return, Abram was met by Melchisedech, King of Salem, who combined the priestly with the royal dignity, "He brought forth bread and wine, and blessed Abram, and blessed the Most High God by whose protection the enemies were in his hands." In return Abram gave him tithes of all the spoil; but, when pressed by the King of Sodom to accept a part of it for himself, he generously refused to do so (Gen. xiv.).

Melchisedech was a priest of an order different from that of Aaron, inasmuch as he offered in sacrifice *bread and wine*, a figure of Christ's sacrifice in the Mass.

In the person, too, of Melchisedech everything was figurative of our Saviour. Melchisedech was both king and priest, so was Christ (Heb. vii. 1); Melchisedech was mediator between God and men, so was Christ (Heb. v. 1-10). Neither his ancestors, nor his parents, nor his birth, nor his death are given; and in this he is again likened by St. Paul to Christ who, "having neither beginning of day nor end of life, continueth a priest for ever" (Heb. vii. 3).

CHAPTER X

BIRTH OF ISMAEL

After Abram's return from rescuing Lot, the Lord appeared to him in a vision for the fourth time and said: "Fear not, Abram, I am thy protector, and thy reward exceeding great." Abram said to Him: "Lord God, what wilt Thou give me? I shall go without children, and lo, my servant, born in my house, shall be my heir." Thereupon God not only expressly told him that he should have a son, but, bidding him look up to heaven and number the stars if he could, promised that his seed should be as numerous, and that they should possess the land on which he stood. Abram believed God, and it was reputed to him unto justice.

Having prepared for a great sacrifice at the bidding of Almighty God, Abram, when the sun was setting, fell into a deep sleep, and a great and darksome horror came over him. And a voice was heard saying: "Know thou beforehand that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land not their own, and they shall bring them under bondage, and afflict them four hundred years. But I will judge the nation which they serve, and after this they shall come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace, and be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return hither; for as yet the iniquities of the Amorrhites are not at the full."* When the sun was set, a dark mist arose, and there appeared a smoking furnace and a lamp of fire passing between the divided victims.

* "And the abode of the Children of Israel that they made in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years" (Exod. xii. 40).

Then God made a covenant with Abram, saying: " To thy seed will I give this land, from the river of Egypt even to the great river Euphrates."

At the time of Abram's return from Egypt, he brought with him, as handmaid to Sarai, a young Egyptian woman named Agar, and as Sarai was now growing old and was still childless, she begged her husband to take Agar as his second wife. Abram yielded to his wife's request; but no sooner did Agar find herself thus honoured than she began to despise her mistress.

Sarai complained to Abram of her conduct, but he said to her: " Behold thy handmaid is in thy own hand; use her as it pleaseth thee." And when Sarai afflicted her, she ran away.

Overcome with grief, Agar sat down by the fountain which is on the way to Sur. Here an angel appeared to her and said: " Agar, handmaid of Sarai, whence comest thou, and whither goest thou?" She answered: " I flee from the face of Sarai, my mistress." The angel said to her: " Return to thy mistress, and humble thyself under her hand. I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, and it shall not be numbered for multitude. Behold thou shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Ismael, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. He shall be a wild man; his hand will be against all men, and all men's hands against him."

Astonished at this mysterious apparition, Agar named the fountain " The well of Him that liveth and seeth me," and went back to Abram's house, where in time she gave birth to a son and called his name Ismael (Gen. xv., xvi.).

CHAPTER XI

THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION—ABRAHAM ENTERTAINS THREE ANGELS

THIRTEEN years after the birth of Ismael, God again appeared to Abram, and after renewing his former promises to him, said: " I am, and My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the father of many nations. Neither shall thy name be called any more Abram (*exalted father*), but thou shalt be called Abraham (*father of a multitude*), because I have made thee a father of many nations. Thou shalt keep My covenant, and thy seed after thee. This is My covenant which you shall observe: *all the male kind of you shall be circumcised ;* and this circumcision shall be for a sign of the covenant between Me and you. The male whose flesh shall not be circumcised shall be destroyed out of his people, because he hath broken My covenant."

God also said to Abraham: " Thy wife shall no longer be called Sarai (*my princess*), but Sara (*the princess*); I will bless her, and of her I will give to thee a son whom I will bless; and he shall become nations, and kings of peoples shall spring from him. Thou shalt call his name Isaac, and I will establish My covenant with him, and with his seed after him."

Without delay Abraham carried out the covenant of God with

regard to his own household, and on that day circumcised himself, as well as Ismael and all his male servants.

Soon after this, while Abraham was dwelling at Mambre, he was one day sitting at the door of his tent when he saw three strangers coming towards him. Immediately he advanced to meet them, and bowing down before them, asked that he might wash their feet and offer them refreshment. "Do," they said, "as thou hast spoken." At once he hastened back to Sara and bade her make three cakes, while he himself chose from the herd a tender calf, which he gave to his servants to kill and dress. When the meal was ready, he seated his guests under a tree, and waited on them himself.

The meal over, they inquired for Sara, and one of them told Abraham that, by the time they came that way again in the following year, she should have a son. Sara, who overheard what was said, laughed secretly behind the door of the tent, as though, on account of her advanced years, the promise could not be fulfilled. Whereupon the angel, for such he was, rebuked her want of trust and asked her if anything was hard or impossible with God. The three then arose and departed in the direction of Sodom, accompanied on their way by Abraham (Gen. xvii., xviii.).

CHAPTER XII

DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRHA, B.C. 1897

As they went along, one of the angels said to Abraham: "The cry of Sodom and Gomorrha is multiplied, and their sin is become exceedingly grievous."

When Abraham found that the angel was about to destroy the wicked cities, fearing that the innocent might suffer with the guilty, he said to him: "If there be fifty just men in the city, shall they perish also, and wilt thou not spare that place for the sake of the fifty just?" The angel answered: "If I find fifty just men, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

Again Abraham spoke, saying: "I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am but dust and ashes. What if there be five less than fifty? Wilt thou for five-and-forty destroy the whole city?" The angel replied: "I will not destroy it if I find five-and-forty."

Abraham pleaded: "But if forty be found there what wilt thou do?" He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of forty."

"Lord," said Abraham, "be not angry, I beseech thee, if I speak: What if thirty shall be found there?" He answered: "I will not destroy it if I find thirty."

"Seeing," continued Abraham, "I have once begun, I will speak to my Lord. What if twenty be found?" He replied: "I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty."

"I beseech thee," said Abraham, "be not angry, Lord, if I speak yet once more: What if ten be found there?" "Even so," he answered, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten."

Abraham then took leave of the angel and returned home, the other two having proceeded on their way to Sodom.

When the angels reached Sodom in the evening, they found Lot sitting at the gate of the city. At once he rose up to salute them and pressed them to remain with him that night, saying: " I beseech you, my lords, turn into the house of your servant and lodge there; and in the morning you shall go on your way." At first they expressed their intention of remaining in the street, but, prevailed upon at length to come into his house, they were entertained with great hospitality.

But before Lot and his guests retired for the night, the house was beset by a band of lawless men, who boldly demanded that the strangers should be delivered up to them.

Grieved at the insult, Lot went out to the Sodomites, and by every entreaty tried to dissuade them from their evil purpose. But the more he argued with them, the more violent did they become. They bade him remember that he himself was but a stranger in their midst, and threatened to treat him with more violence than those whom he was trying to shelter from them. They even began to press forward, and were on the point of forcing their way into the house, when the angels, stretching out their hands, drew in Lot and secured the door against the mob. At the same instant they struck with blindness all who were without the house, so that they could not find the door.

In the morning the angels commanded Lot to take with him every member of his family and flee from the city, which they were about to destroy on account of the wickedness of its inhabitants. Lot at once warned his two intended sons-in-law of the destruction that was so soon to befall the sinful city, and besought them to escape with him and his family while there was yet time. They, however, not only disregarded his advice, but ridiculed him and treated him as a dreamer.

The angels then urged Lot to depart without further delay. " Arise," they said, " take thy wife and thy two daughters, lest thou also perish in the wickedness of the city. At the same time they cautioned them not to look back, but to flee with all speed to the neighbouring mountain. But Lot, afraid of flying thither, begged leave to seek refuge in the town of Segor, which was not far distant. His request was granted.

The sun had already risen when Lot arrived at Segor; and then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrha fire and brimstone from heaven, and utterly consumed them, as well as two smaller cities. The country around was also destroyed, together with all the inhabitants thereof.

Lot's wife, forgetful of the angels' warning not to look back, turned her eyes in the direction of Sodom, and for her disobedience was at once changed into a pillar of salt. Her husband, struck with terror, and fearing that he himself might not be safe even at Segor, fled with his two daughters to the mountain which the angels had first pointed out, and there he dwelt in a cave.

In course of time his elder daughter became the mother of Moab, the ancestor of the Moabites, and the younger the mother of Ammon, from whom were descended the Ammonites (Gen. xix.).

CHAPTER XIII

THE BIRTH OF ISAAC—AGAR AND ISMAEL ARE CAST FORTH

Soon after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha, Abraham moved to Gerara, at that time the chief seat of the Philistines. Here he and Sara were exposed to a danger similar to that which they had experienced during their sojourn in Egypt, a danger which Abraham again tried to avert by calling Sara his sister. When King Abimelech saw Sara, he wished to make her his wife, but warned by God of her real relationship to Abraham, he restored her to her husband, whom he severely rebuked for his deceit. To Sara he said: "Behold I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: this shall serve thee for a covering of thy eyes to all that are with thee, and whithersoever thou shalt go."

It was while Abraham was at Gerara or at Bersabee that Sara gave birth to a son, whom his father circumcised on the eighth day and named Isaac, as God had commanded him. Abraham was at this time 100 years old.

At the great feast made to celebrate the weaning of Isaac, Ismael, the son of Agar, was seen to mock the child. Sara said to Abraham: "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son Isaac."

Abraham was greatly troubled at this; but God said to him: "Let it not seem grievous to thee for the boy and for thy bondwoman. In all that Sara hath said to thee, hearken to her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be blessed. But I will make the son also of the bondwoman a great nation, because he is thy seed."

The next morning Abraham took bread and a bottle of water, and putting them upon Agar's shoulder, delivered the boy to her and sent her away. For a time she wandered in the wilderness of Bersabee till, the water in her bottle being spent, the young Ismael was on the point of dying of thirst. In despair Agar placed him under a tree and went a short distance away, unable to bear the sight of his sufferings. Here, seated as far from him as a bow can carry, she said: "I will not see my son die;" and she wept bitterly.

But God heard the cry of the child, and sent an angel to Agar. Suddenly she heard a voice calling: "What art thou doing, Agar? Fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the boy. Arise, take him up and hold him by the hand, for I will make him a great nation." At the same time God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water, at which she filled her bottle and gave the boy to drink.

When Ismael was grown up, he dwelt in the wilderness of Pharan, and became an archer. His mother took a wife for him out of the

land of Egypt, and he became the father of twelve sons and of a daughter named Maheleth, who was afterwards married to Esau.

A dispute arose between Abraham and King Abimelech regarding a well which the servants of Abimelech had taken from Abraham by force. A treaty having been made between them and ratified by an oath, they gave the place the name of Bersabee, or *the well of oath*. For a long time Abraham was a sojourner in the land of the Philistines (Gen. xx., xxi.).

Abraham's wives, Sara and Agar, and his two sons, Isaac and Ismael, were types of the two testaments or covenants which God made with His people. Ismael, the son of the bondwoman, was a figure of those who lived under the Jewish dispensation; but the Church was prefigured in Isaac, the son of the freewoman: moreover, in the expulsion of Agar and her son was foreshadowed the rejection of the Jews. "We are the children not of the bondwoman, but of the free; by the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free" (Gal. iv. 31).

CHAPTER XIV

ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE—DEATH OF SARA

BEFORE Abraham left Bersabee, God to prove his faith and obedience, appeared to him and said: "Take thy only-begotten son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and go into the land of vision; there thou shalt offer him for a holocaust (*a whole burnt-offering*) upon one of the mountains which I will show thee."

Abraham hesitated not. He rose up in the night and saddled his ass, and taking with him two young men and Isaac his son, together with wood for the holocaust, went his way to the place pointed out to him by God. It was not till the third day that he came in sight of the mountain on which he was to offer the sacrifice, and then only did he make known his intentions. To the two servants he said: "Stay you here with the ass. I and the boy will go with speed as far as yonder, and after we have worshipped, will return to you." Taking the wood intended for the sacrifice, he laid it upon Isaac, while he himself carried in his hands fire and a sword.

As they went on together, Isaac said to his father: "My father." Abraham answered: "What wilt thou, my son?" "Behold," he said, "fire and a sword: where is the victim for the holocaust?" Abraham replied: "God will provide a victim for a holocaust." Thus they proceeded on their way.

Arrived at length at the place indicated, Abraham built an altar, and after arranging the wood in order, bound Isaac and laid him upon it. He then put forth his hand and took the sword to sacrifice his son.

But behold an angel of the Lord from heaven called to him and said: "Lay not thy hand upon the boy, neither do thou any injury to him: now I know that thou fearest God, for whose sake thou hast

not spared thy only-begotten son." Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw a ram held fast by its horns amongst the briers; and this he took and offered for a holocaust instead of his son. He then named the place *the Lord seeth.*

A second time the angel called to him and said: "Because thou hast done this thing, saith the Lord, and hast not spared thy only-begotten son for My sake, I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is on the sea-shore; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed My voice." Having rejoined the young man, Abraham returned with Isaac to Bersabee.

Not many years after this, Sara, at the age of 127 years, died at Arbee, or Hebron, in the land of Chanaan. Her loss was deeply mourned by Abraham. As a burial place for her, and one which might serve as a sepulchre for his family, he bought of Ephron, the son of Seor, a field in which was a double cave (Gen. xxii., xxiii.).

Isaac was a striking figure of our Saviour offered for the sins of men. The mountain on which Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his son was Mount Moria, on one part of which was afterwards built the Temple; while on another part, called Calvary, our Saviour was crucified after having carried His cross, as Isaac carried the wood on which he was to be sacrificed. He was like our Saviour, too, in his humble submission to his father's will, even unto death.

CHAPTER XV

MARRIAGE OF ISAAC—DEATH OF ABRAHAM, B.C. 1821

Now that Sara was dead and Abraham was advanced in years, he became anxious for the marriage of Isaac. He therefore called to him his faithful servant Eliezer, and bade him prepare to go into Mesopotamia, saying: "The Lord God of Heaven who took me out of my father's house, and out of my native country, who spoke to me and swore to me, saying: To thy seed will I give this land: He will send His angel before thee, and thou shalt take thence a wife for my son."

Without delay Eliezer chose ten camels from his master's herd, and departing on his journey, came to the city of Nachor, or Haran, where Abraham had made some stay after leaving Ur, and where Nachor, the brother of Abraham, had settled.

When Eliezer had made the camels lie down near a well outside the town, at the time when women were wont to come out to draw water, he prayed thus: "O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, meet me to-day, I beseech Thee, and show kindness to my master. Behold I stand nigh the spring, and the daughters of the inhabitants of this city will come out to draw water. Now, therefore, the maid to whom I shall say: Let down thy pitcher that I may drink; and she shall answer: Drink, and I will give thy camels to drink also: let it be

the same whom Thou hast provided for Thy servant Isaac; and by this I shall understand that Thou hast shown kindness to my master."

He had not yet ended his prayer, when, behold, there came out of the city Rebecca, the daughter of Bathuel, who was the son of Nachor, Abraham's brother. She was a comely maid, and most beautiful. Bearing on her shoulder a pitcher, she went down to the spring to fill it, and was coming back, when Eliezer drew near and said: "Give me a little water to drink out of thy pitcher." She answered: "Drink, my lord," and quickly letting down the pitcher upon her arm she gave him to drink, and offered to draw water for his camels also.

For a little while Eliezer regarded her in silent astonishment, convinced by this that she was the one whom God had destined to be the wife of Isaac. He therefore presented her with golden earrings and bracelets, and asked her whose daughter she was, and whether at her father's house there was any place for him to lodge in. She answered: "I am the daughter of Bathuel, the son of Nachor. We have good store of both straw and hay, and a large place to lodge in." Eliezer bowed himself down and adored the Lord, saying: "Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not taken away His mercy and truth, and hath brought me the straight way into the house of my master's brother."

The maid ran back to the house and told her mother all that had happened, whereupon her brother Laban, after making a few hasty preparations for the stranger's reception, went out to meet Eliezer. He said to him: "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; why standest thou without? I have prepared the house and a place for the camels." He then brought him into his lodging, and invited him to partake of some refreshment while he went to unharness the camels and to give them straw and hay.

Eliezer, however, refused to eat till he had delivered his message. Asked to speak, he said: "I am the servant of Abraham. The Lord hath blessed my master wonderfully, and he is become great. Moreover, Sara, my master's wife, hath borne a son in her old age, and my master made me swear: Thou shalt go to my father's house to take a wife for my son from among my own kindred." He then told them how he had prayed for guidance, and the wonderful manner in which Rebecca had been pointed out to him as the one destined by God to be the wife of Isaac.

Both Bathuel and Laban saw that the whole matter had been guided by the hand of God and said to Eliezer: "Behold, Rebecca is before thee: take her and go thy way, and let her be the wife of thy master's son, as the Lord hath spoken." Thereupon Eliezer produced vessels of silver and gold and rich ornaments, which he gave as presents to Rebecca, and offered gifts also to her brothers and to her mother. A banquet was prepared, and they ate and drank together.

The next morning, Rebecca and her maids were placed upon camels, and, with the blessings of her people, joined Eliezer and set out at once for the land of Chanaan.

On being told by Eliezer all that had happened, Isaac welcomed

Rebecca and took her for his wife. His love for her served in a great measure to soothe the grief which he still felt for his mother's death. At this time Isaac was forty years old.

To Isaac, Abraham gave all his possessions, and being now in a good old age and full of days, he was gathered to his people at the age of 175 years. Isaac and Ismael buried him beside Sara in the double cave situated over against Mambre (Gen. xxiv., xxv.).

Abraham's life was a pattern of all virtues, but especially of faith and obedience; " nor was there found the like to him in glory, who kept the law of the Most High, and was in covenant with Him. In his flesh he established the covenant, and in temptation he was found faithful " (Ecclus. xliv. 20, 21).

CHAPTER XVI

BIRTH OF ESAU AND JACOB

For twenty years Rebecca remained childless; but Isaac besought the Lord for his wife, and in answer to his prayer twin sons were born to him. Esau, the first-born, was the favourite of his father, and became a husbandman and daring hunter; while Jacob, Rebecca's favourite, grew up into a gentle youth and dwelt in tents.

On one occasion when Esau had returned hungry and weary from the chase, he saw his brother with a mess of red pottage made of lentils, and earnestly begged for it. Jacob refused to give it except on the condition that he would part with his birthright in exchange for the savoury meal. Nor was Jacob satisfied with a mere promise, but required Esau to confirm the agreement with an oath. This he did; " and taking bread and red pottage of lentils, he ate and drank and went his way, making little account of having sold his birthright."

A famine having broken out in the land, Isaac was compelled to journey southward, and came to Gerara, where a danger similar to that experienced by Abraham awaited him. Like Abraham, too, he gave out that his wife was his sister, hoping thus to escape any violence from the people of Gerara on account of Rebecca. When their true relationship became known, Abimelech, the king, reproved him for his deceit, but allowed him to remain among the Philistines. Here God prospered him exceedingly.

Isaac's good fortune drew upon him the envy of his neighbours. They not only drove him from their midst, but, to prevent his return, they filled up all the wells which his father, Abraham, had dug. After a time he took up his abode at Bersabee, where the Lord appeared to him and said: " I am the God of Abraham thy father: do not fear, for I am with thee. I will bless thee and multiply thy seed for My servant Abraham's sake."

Esau, now forty years of age, married Judith and Basemath, both daughters of the Hethites. As the Hethites were idolaters, the marriage was a source of much grief to Isaac and Rebecca (Gen. xxv., xxvi.).

CHAPTER XVII

JACOB SUPPLANTS ESAU

When Isaac was far advanced in years, and his eyes were growing dim, he called Esau, his first-born son, and said to him: "Thou seest that I am old, and know not the day of my death. Take thy arms, thy quiver, and bow, and go abroad; and when thou hast taken something by hunting, make me savoury meat thereof, as thou knowest I like, and bring it that I may eat, and my soul may bless thee before I die."

Rebecca heard what was said, and when Esau had gone into the fields in obedience to his father's wishes, she called Jacob to her and explained to him all that had happened, adding: "My son, follow my counsel: go to the flock, and bring me two kids of the best, and I will make of them meat for thy father, such as he gladly eateth, that he may bless thee before he die." Jacob said to her: "Thou knowest that Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am smooth. If my father shall feel me and perceive it, I shall bring upon me a curse instead of a blessing." Rebecca said to him: "Upon me be this curse, my son; only hear thou my voice, and fetch me the things which I have said."

Jacob went out and brought to his mother what she wanted. She dressed the meats; and having arrayed Jacob in his brother's garments, she covered his hands and neck with the skins of the kids, and bade him carry the meats to his father and ask his blessing.

He presented himself before Isaac and said: "My father." Isaac answered: "I hear. Who art thou, my son?" Jacob said to him: "I am Esau, thy first-born. I have done as thou didst command me. Arise, sit and eat my venison, that thy soul may bless me." Isaac said to him: "How couldst thou find it so quickly, my son?" He answered: "It was the will of God that what I sought came quickly in my way." "Come hither," said Isaac, "that I may feel thee, and may prove whether thou be my son Esau or no." Jacob then drew near to his father, who felt him and said: "The voice indeed is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." And he knew him not, because his hairy hands made him like to his elder brother.

Still doubting, he asked once more: "Art thou my son Esau?" He answered: "I am." Then he said: "Bring me the meats of thy hunting, my son, that my soul may bless thee."

When they were brought, and he had eaten, Jacob offered him wine also. After he had drunk, he said to him: "Come near me, and give me a kiss, my son." Jacob did so; and when Isaac perceived the fragrance of his son's garments, he blessed him, saying, "Behold the smell of my son is as the smell of a plentiful field which the Lord hath blessed. God give thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, abundance of corn and wine. Let peoples serve thee, and tribes worship thee: be thou lord of thy brethren, and let

thy mother's children bow down before thee. Cursed be he that curseth thee; and let him that blesseth thee be filled with blessings."

Scarcely had Jacob left his father's presence when Esau came in with the meats prepared of what he had taken in hunting. "My father," he said, "arise, and eat of thy son's venison, that thy soul may bless me."

Isaac was struck with fear, and, wondering exceedingly, he said: "Who is he, then, that even now brought me venison that he had taken, and I ate of all before thou camest? And I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed."

Hearing his father's words, Esau was amazed, and cried aloud: "Bless me also, my father." Isaac said to him: "Thy brother came deceitfully and got thy blessing." Esau exclaimed; "Rightly is his name called Jacob, for he hath supplanted me, lo, this second time. My first birthright he took away before, and now this second time he hath stolen away my blessing. My father, hast thou not reserved a blessing for me also? Hast thou only one blessing, father? I beseech thee bless me, too." He then wept bitterly.

Moved with pity, Isaac said to him: "In the fat of the earth and in the dew of heaven from above shall thy blessing be. Thou shalt live by the sword, and shalt serve thy brother; and the time shall come when thou shalt shake off his yoke from thy neck." From this time Esau hated Jacob, and said in his heart: "The days will come of the mourning of my father, and I will kill my brother Jacob."

Knowing Esau's wicked intention, Rebecca called Jacob to her and said: "Behold Esau thy brother threateneth to kill thee. Now, therefore, arise and flee to Laban, my brother, at Haran; and thou shalt dwell with him till the wrath of thy brother be soothed, and he forget the things thou hast done to him. Afterwards I will send and bring thee back hither." Concealing her real motive from Isaac, she prevailed on him to let Jacob go to her father Bathuel, in Mesopotamia, that he might take a wife from among the daughters of her brother Laban (Gen. xxvii.).

CHAPTER XVIII

JACOB'S FLIGHT AND MARRIAGE

When Jacob was on the point of departing for Mesopotamia, his father blessed him a second time, saying: "May God Almighty bless thee, and make thee to increase, and give the blessings of Abraham to thee, and to thy seed after thee, that thou mayest possess the land of thy sojournment which He promised to thy grandfather." Jacob then set out on his journey.

Esau, seeing that his father had blessed Jacob, and had sent him into Mesopotamia to take a wife thence, and knowing that his father was not well pleased with the daughters of Chanaan, went to Ismael, the son of Abraham, and took his daughter Maheleth as his third wife.

The first evening after Jacob had left his father's house, he arrived

in the neighbourhood of Luza, where, wearied with his long journey, he lay down to rest. He took a stone which he found close at hand, and placing it under his head for a pillow, soon fell fast asleep. In his sleep he saw a ladder standing upon the earth and reaching up to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending by it. The Lord Himself appeared to him, leaning on the ladder, and said to him: " I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac. The land wherein thou sleepest I will give to thee and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and in thee and thy seed all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed. And I will be thy keeper whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee back into this land."

When Jacob awoke, trembling and afraid, he exclaimed: " Indeed the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. How terrible is this place. This is no other than the house of God and the gate of heaven. He then arose, and taking the stone which he had laid under his head, set it up as a memorial, pouring oil on the top of it. And he changed the name of the place to Bethel—that is to say, the House of God. He also made a vow, saying: " If God shall be with me, and shall keep me in the way by which I walk, and shall give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, and I shall return prosperously to my father's house, the Lord shall be my God; and of all things that Thou shalt give me I will offer tithes to Thee." He then continued on his way, and came into the east country where Laban dwelt.

Here he saw a well and three flocks of sheep lying by it; but the mouth of the well was closed with a great stone. Going up to the shepherds he asked them if they knew Laban. They answered him that they did; and while they were yet speaking, behold Rachel, the daughter of Laban, was seen approaching the well to water the flock. Being told who she was, Jacob went to meet his cousin, and saluting her, informed her that he was her father's nephew and the son of Rebecca. He then rolled the stone from the mouth of the well that her flocks might drink. Rachel went in haste and told her father, who, when he heard that Jacob, his sister's son, was come, ran forth to welcome him, and brought him into his house.

Jacob explained to Laban the cause of his leaving home and the object of his long journey, and expressed his willingness to remain with him and serve him as a shepherd. Asked what wages he would require in return for his services, Jacob promised to serve him seven years for the hand of his daughter Rachel. To this Laban consented, and Jacob thought the seven years seemed but a few days, because of the greatness of his love.

But a sore disappointment was in store for him. On the very night of the marriage, Laban, unwilling to see Rachel married before her elder sister, substituted Lia in her stead. No sooner, however, did Jacob discover the deception than he went to Laban and reproached him for his want of sincerity and for the injustice done to him.

Laban explained the reason of his action, but promised that in seven days he would give him Rachel also in marriage, on condition that he would serve him yet another seven years. Jacob agreed to the proposal, and after the week was past, he married Rachel also.

During his stay with Laban he became the father of a numerous family consisting of eleven sons and a daughter (Gen. xxviii., xxx.).

The mysterious ladder which God showed to Jacob was a figure of our Saviour whose innumerable merits, like the rungs of the ladder, have re-established the connection between heaven and earth.

It was also a figure of what happens daily in regard to God's faithful servants. The Almighty gazes down upon them from the heights of heaven, and His angels, ascending, carry their petitions to the throne of God, and, descending, bring down His graces to them.

CHAPTER XIX

JACOB'S DEPARTURE—HE IS PURSUED BY LABAN

Soon after the birth of Joseph, Jacob desired leave of his father-in-law to return to his own country. But Laban, knowing how God had blessed him since Jacob had taken up his abode with him, besought him to remain and to name the wages that should be given him. They came to an agreement according to which Jacob was to serve Laban six years longer, and to receive in return for his labours, a certain share of the flocks.

So much did God bless Jacob in his possessions that Laban and his sons grew jealous of him, and lowered his wages again and again. He therefore resolved to start for his own country as soon as a favourable opportunity should offer. To confirm his resolve God said to him: " I am the God of Bethel where thou didst anoint the stone and make a vow to Me. Now, therefore, arise, and go out of this land, and return into thy native country."

Jacob made known his intention to Rachel and Lia; and while Laban was away in the country shearing his sheep, he got together all his goods and prepared to depart at once. Placing his wives and children upon camels, he crossed the river Euphrates and directed his steps towards the land of Chanaan, without taking leave of Laban. Before setting out, Rachel, unknown to her husband, secretly carried off her father's idols and hid them in the camel's furniture.

Three days afterwards, Laban received word of their flight, and with his servants and dependants set out in pursuit. He came upon them on the seventh day encamped on the mountain range of Galaad (*Gilead*), where he also pitched his tent, and where God appeared to him in a dream and said: " Take heed thou speak nothing harshly against Jacob."

Coming to Jacob, Laban said to him: " Why hast thou done thus, to carry away, without my knowledge, my daughters as captives taken with the sword? Why didst thou run away privately, and not acquaint me, that I might have brought thee on the way with joy,

and with songs, and with timbrels, and with harps? Thou hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and daughters; thou hast done foolishly. And supposing thou didst desire to go to thy friends, and hadst a longing after thy father's house, why hast thou stolen away my gods?"

Jacob answered: "I departed unknown to thee for fear lest thou wouldst take away thy daughters by force. But whereas thou chargest me with theft; with whomsoever thou shalt find thy gods, let him be slain before our brethren." Now when he said this, he knew not that Rachel had stolen them.

Search was made in Jacob's tent, yet nowhere could they discover the idols. In like manner Lia's tent was examined but with the same result. At length they came to the tent of Rachel, who in haste had hidden the idols, and was sitting upon them at the moment of their entering. She begged them to excuse her for not rising to salute them as she was not well enough to stand; and here, too, their search proved vain.

Jacob was angry with Laban, and said to him: "For what fault of mine hast thou so hotly pursued me and searched all my household stuff? What hast thou found of all the substance of thy house? Lay it here before my brethren and thy brethren, and let them judge between me and thee. For twenty years have I been with thee. All that by accident was damaged I made good: whatsoever was lost by theft thou didst exact of me: day and night was I parched with heat and with frost, and sleep departed from my eyes; and ten times hast thou changed my wages. God beheld my affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesterday."

Soon, however, they forgot the subject of their quarrel, and their meeting ended peacefully. Stones were gathered and made into a heap, which Laban called *Galaad*, or the Witness Heap, and Jacob *The Hill of Testimony*. Beyond this neither was to go to injure the other's possessions. That night Laban arose and kissed his daughters and their children, and blessing them, he bade them farewell and returned home (Gen. xxx., xxxi.).

CHAPTER XX

JACOB'S VISION OF ANGELS—HIS RETURN

Relieved now from all fear of Laban, Jacob proceeded on his way, and was met by angels in a spot which he named Mahanaim, or *The Two Camps*, saying: "These are the camps of God."

From this place he sent messengers before him to Esau, who was then dwelling in the neighbourhood of Mount Seir, in the land of Edom. "Tell him," he said, "I have sojourned with Laban, and have been with him until this day. I have oxen, asses, and sheep, men-servants and women-servants, and now I send messengers that I may find favour in the sight of my lord."

Soon the messengers returned and informed Jacob that his brother was coming with all speed to meet him, accompanied by 400 men.

Jacob was greatly terrified, and in his fear divided the people that

were with him, as well as the beasts, into two companies. "If Esau come to one company and destroy it," he said, "the other company that is left shall escape." He then prayed thus: "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, deliver me from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am greatly afraid of him, lest perhaps he come and kill the mother with the children." After he had slept there that night, he set apart, as presents for his brother, 220 goats and as many sheep, besides a large number of camels, oxen, and asses. These he sent on by servants, commanding the leaders of the different droves to present them successively to his brother with the words: "Thy servant Jacob hath sent them as a present to my lord Esau, and he himself cometh after us." In this way did Jacob hope to appease the anger of Esau.

Jacob himself remained behind for a time in the camp; then taking his wives and children, he sent them over the ford Jaboc, together with his flocks and herds, while he remained alone to pray.

In the night there appeared to him a man who wrestled with him; and after the struggle had lasted till morning, and Jacob still refused to yield, the man, or rather the angel in human shape, touched his thigh, which straightway began to shrink. Still Jacob would not relax his hold till the stranger had promised to bless him.

The angel then said to him: "Thy name shall not any longer be called Jacob, but Israel (*one that prevaileth against God*); for if thou hast been strong against God, how much more shalt thou prevail against men?" Thereupon the angel vanished, and Jacob called the name of the place Phanuel (*The Face of God*); for he said: "I have seen God face to face and my soul (*i.e., my life*) has been saved."

In memory of the shrinking of Jacob's sinew, which left him lame, the children of Israel from this time forth refrained from eating the corresponding sinew in the thigh of any animal.

In the morning Jacob crossed the ford, and seeing Esau with his four hundred followers coming in the distance, he began at once to arrange his company. He then went forward and bowed down seven times with his face to the ground till Esau came up.

As soon as Esau perceived that it was Jacob, all feelings of resentment left his heart. Overjoyed at meeting his brother once again, he ran to embrace him, and clasping him about the neck and kissing him, wept for joy. It was with difficulty that he could be prevailed upon to accept any of the gifts. His anger against Jacob was now forgotten, and he besought him to accompany him on his journey; but Jacob said to him: "My lord, thou knowest that I have with me tender children, and sheep, and cattle. If my herds be overdriven, in one day will they all die. May it please thee, then, to go on before me, and I will follow softly after. I want nothing else, only to find favour in thy sight." Upon this Esau returned to his own country.

After parting from his brother, Jacob came to Socoth (*tents*), where he built a house for himself, and put up tents or booths for his cattle. There he appears to have stayed a considerable time before passing over to Salem in the land of Chanaan. From the Sichemites

he bought a piece of land on which he pitched his tent, and raised an altar " to the most mighty God of Israel " (Gen. xxxii., xxxiii.).

CHAPTER XXI

JACOB IN SICHEM—DEATH OF ISAAC

It was while Jacob was dwelling at Sichem that Dina, his only daughter, went, out of curiosity, to see the women of the place, and was forcibly carried off by Sichem, the son of Hemor, the prince of that land. Jacob's sons, hearing of the shameful wrong done to their sister, were exceedingly angry and meditated revenge.

Hemor and his son came to Jacob and offered to make every amends in their power if he would but give his daughter in marriage to Sichem. Jacob's sons answered them deceitfully, and seizing a favourable opportunity for avenging their sister, Simeon and Levi entered the city, and treacherously slew every man therein. They then took away their sister, while the other sons of Jacob came up and plundered the city. They drove off the flocks and herds of the slain, destroyed their crops, and took captive their wives and children.

Jacob was bitterly grieved at this act of treachery on the part of his sons, and said to Simeon and Levi: " You have troubled me and made me hateful to the inhabitants of the land. We are few: they will gather themselves together and kill me; and both I and my house shall be destroyed."

The Lord, however, appeared to Jacob and said: " Arise and go up to Bethel, and dwell there, and make there an altar to God, who appeared to thee when thou didst flee from Esau thy brother." After Jacob and his family had departed, the terror of God fell upon the inhabitants of the surrounding cities, and they durst not pursue them as they went away.

At Bethel God appeared to Jacob, and, confirming the words of the angel, blessed him, saying: " Thou shalt not be called Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name. Nations and kings shall be from thee: the land which I gave to Abraham and to Isaac I will give to thee and to thy seed after thee."

Moving from Bethel, Jacob first came to Ephrata (*Bethlehem*) where Rachel—the mother of Joseph—died in giving birth to Benjamin, Jacob's youngest son.

After a time Jacob came to Hebron, where he remained till after the death of Isaac at the age of 180 years. The holy patriarch was laid to rest by the side of Abraham, Sara, and Rebecca, in the double cave at Mambre (Gen. xxxiv., xxxv.).

CHAPTER XXII

JOSEPH'S DREAMS—HE IS SOLD INTO EGYPT, B.C. 1728

Twelve years before the death of Isaac, and while Jacob was still living at Hebron, a bitter trial befell him. His son Joseph, now a youth of sixteen, was one day in the fields with his brethren, and

on his return home accused them to his father of a most wicked crime.

This filled them with anger against him. Their ill-feeling, moreover, was increased by the preference shown to him by his father, who, as a mark of his love for him, had made him a coat of many colours.

About this time Joseph had a dream, which he told to his brethren, and which caused them to dislike him the more. "I thought," he said, "we were binding sheaves in a field, and my sheaf arose, as it were, and stood, and your sheaves standing about, bowed down before my sheaf." They asked him if he thought that he was to be their king, and that they were to be subject to his dominion.

Soon afterwards Joseph had another dream, which he related as follows: "I saw in a dream, as it were, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars worshipping me." Hereupon his father rebuked him, and asked "What meaneth this dream? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren worship thee upon the earth?" The dislike of his brothers grew into hatred, but his father carefully considered the matter within himself.

Not long after this Jacob called Joseph to him and said: "Thy brethren feed the sheep in Sichem: come, I will send thee to them. Go, and see if all things be well with them and the cattle, and bring me word." While Joseph was wandering in the fields in search of them, he met a man who directed him to go to Dothain where he would find them.

His brethren, seeing him coming, thought to kill him, and said to one another: "Behold here is the dreamer. Come, let us kill him, and cast him into some old pit; and we will tell our father that some beast hath devoured him. Then it shall appear what his dreams avail him." "Do not take away his life," said Ruben, "nor shed his blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness." This he said, as it was his intention to deliver Joseph out of their hands.

As soon as Joseph drew near, they seized him; and stripping him of his coat of many colours, cast him into an old well in which there was no water. They then sat down to eat, and while they were at their meal, they espied some Ismaelite merchants with their camels on their way from Galaad to Egypt. Juda said to his brethren: "What will it profit us to kill our brother, and conceal his blood? It is better that he be sold to the Ismaelites, and that our hands be not defiled; for he is our brother." The proposal was agreed to by all except Ruben, who chanced to be absent at the time; and Joseph was drawn out of the well and sold for twenty pieces of silver to the Ismaelites, who continued their journey to Egypt.

Hardly had they got out of sight when Ruben returned to the well in the hope of rescuing his brother; but when he found that Joseph was no longer there, he was filled with grief, not knowing what had become of him.

Meanwhile the other brothers dipped Joseph's coat in the blood of

a kid which they had just killed and sent it to their father with the message: "This we have found in the fields: see whether it be thy son's coat or not." No sooner did Jacob see it than, overwhelmed with grief, he exclaimed: "It is indeed my son's coat: an evil beast hath eaten him, a beast hath devoured Joseph." Then tearing his garments, he put on sackcloth, and mourned for his son a long time. His children gathered together to comfort him, but he remained inconsolable, saying: "Mourning will I go down into the grave to my son Joseph" (Gen. xxxvii.).

CHAPTER XXIII

JOSEPH IN EGYPT

In the meantime the Ismaelite merchants carried Joseph down into Egypt and sold him to Putiphar, a captain of Pharao's guards. "And the Lord was with him and made all that he did to prosper." He soon found favour with his master, who gave him charge over all his household.

Now Joseph was comely to behold, and soon attracted the admiration of Putiphar's wife, who tried to lead him into sin. But he said to her: "How can I do so wicked a thing and sin against God? Or how can I thus prove myself unfaithful to my master, who has entrusted all things to my care?"

On a certain day, however, while Joseph was alone, she came to him a second time, and again urged him to the same sin, this time seizing his cloak. To escape the danger, he fled out of the room, but was unfortunate enough to leave his cloak in her hands. Then, seized with anger, she called her servants, and accused Joseph to them of having assaulted her. Taking the cloak to her husband as a proof of her pretended fidelity, she said to him: "The Hebrew servant, whom thou hast brought, came to insult me, and when he heard my cry, he left the garment which I held, and fled out." Her husband believed her story, and filled with rage at Joseph's supposed wickedness, cast him into prison.

God did not abandon Joseph even in prison, but gave him such favour with the chief gaoler that all the other prisoners were committed to his care.

It chanced at this time that two of the king's officers, the chief butler and the chief baker, fell into disgrace and were cast into the same prison with Joseph. On the same night each had a dream which troubled him much; and when Joseph came in the next morning and found them downcast, he said to them: "Why is your countenance sadder to-day than usual?" They answered: "We have dreamed a dream, and there is nobody to interpret it to us." Joseph said to them: "Doth not interpretation belong to God? Tell me what you have dreamed."

The chief butler told his dream first. "I saw before me," he said, "a vine on which were three branches, which by little and little sent out buds, and, after the blossoms, brought forth ripe grapes.

The cup of Pharao was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into the cup, which I presented to Pharao."

Joseph said to him: "This is the interpretation of thy dream. The three branches are yet three days, after which Pharao will remember thy service, and will restore thee to thy former place; and thou shalt present him the cup according to thy office as usual. Only remember me when it shall be well with thee, and do me the kindness of asking Pharao to take me out of this prison; for I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and here, without any fault, was cast into the dungeon."

The chief baker said: "I dreamt that I had three baskets of meal upon my head, and that in the basket which was uppermost I carried all kinds of pastry which the birds came and ate."

Joseph said to him: "This is the interpretation of the dream. The three baskets represent three days, after which Pharao will take thy head from thee, and hang thee on a cross, and the birds shall tear thy flesh."

The third day after this was Pharao's birthday. He made a great feast for his servants, and at the banquet remembered the chief butler and the chief baker. The former he restored to his place to present the cup; the latter he hanged upon a gibbet. But the chief butler, when things prospered with him, forgot Joseph.

Two years after this, Pharao also had a dream. He thought he stood by the river Nile, out of which came up seven kine, very beautiful and fat; and they fed in marshy places. Other seven also came up out of the river, ill-favoured and lean, and devoured the former. Again he dreamt that seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, full and fair, and that seven other ears sprang up, thin and blasted, and devoured all the beauty of the former. The king awoke full of fear, and sent for all the interpreters and the wise men of his kingdom; but no one could unfold the meaning of his dreams.

Then only did the chief butler remember Joseph. He told the king how a certain young Hebrew servant had explained his own dream and that of the chief butler, and how strikingly the interpretation had been fulfilled. Pharao at once gave orders for Joseph to be released from prison and brought to him.

When Joseph was brought into the king's presence, Pharao said to him: "I have heard that thou art very wise at interpreting dreams." Joseph answered: "Without me, God shall give Pharao a prosperous answer." The king then recounted to Joseph what he had dreamt. Joseph said to Pharao: "The king's dream is one. God hath shown to Pharao what He is about to do. The seven beautiful kine and the seven full ears are seven years of plenty; and both contain the same meaning. The seven lean and thin kine that came up after them, and the seven thin ears that were blasted with the burning wind, are seven years of famine to come, which shall be fulfilled in this order. Behold there shall come seven years of great plenty in the whole land of Egypt, after which shall follow other seven years of so great a scarcity that all the abundance before shall

be forgotten; for the famine shall consume all the land, and the greatness of the scarcity shall destroy the greatness of the plenty. Now, therefore, let the king provide a wise and industrious man, and make him ruler over the land of Egypt, that he may appoint overseers in all the countries, and gather into barns the fifth part of the fruits during the seven fruitful years. And let all the corn be laid up under Pharao's hands, and be reserved in the cities, and let it be in readiness against the famine of seven years to come which shall oppress Egypt."

This counsel pleased Pharao; and he said to his courtiers: "Can we find such another that is full of the spirit of God?" To Joseph he said: "Thou shalt be over my house, and at thy command all the people shall obey: only in the kingly throne will I be above thee. Behold I have appointed thee over the whole land of Egypt." He then took off the ring from his own hand and gave it to Joseph: and he put on him a robe of silk, and a chain of gold about his neck; and he made him go up into his second chariot, and proclaimed that all should bow the knee before him as governor over the whole land of Egypt. He also changed his name, calling him in the Egyptian tongue "*The Saviour of the World*," and gave him in marriage Aseneth, the daughter of Putiphare, priest of Heliopolis. Joseph was then thirty years old (Gen. xxxix.-xli.).

CHAPTER XXIV

THE FAMINE—JOSEPH'S BRETHREN GO DOWN INTO EGYPT

As Joseph had foretold, the fruitfulness of the seven years came. The corn was gathered into barns, and abundance of grain was laid up in every city. But the seven years of plenty were followed by seven years of scarcity; and famine prevailed not only in Egypt, but in all the neighbouring countries. In their distress the people cried to Pharao for food, but he commanded them to go to Joseph, and to do all that he should tell them. Joseph opened the barns, and sold not only to the Egyptians, but to those who came into Egypt from other lands to seek relief in their want.

At length the famine spread to the land of Chanaan. When Jacob heard that corn was to be bought in Egypt, he said to his sons: "Go ye down into Egypt and buy us necessaries that we may not be consumed with want." Accordingly the ten brothers of Joseph set out on their journey, leaving Benjamin, the youngest, with their father, lest harm might befall him on the way. Having arrived in Egypt along with others who went to buy corn, they were presented to Joseph.

As soon as they appeared in his presence, they bowed down before him, but knew him not. Joseph recognised them at once, and remembered his dreams, yet he did not reveal himself; on the contrary he spoke harshly to them, and charged them with being spies come to spy out the undefended parts of the land. "It is not so, my lord," they said, "but thy servants are come to buy food. We are

twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Chanaan; the youngest is with our father, the other is not living."

Joseph still pretended not to believe them, and said: "I shall presently try what you are: by the health of Pharao, you shall not depart hence until your youngest brother come. Send one of your number to fetch him; and the rest of you shall be in prison till it be proved whether what you have said be true or false: or else, by the health of Pharao, you are spies."

For three days he kept them in prison, at the end of which time he had them brought before him and said: "Do as I have commanded, and you shall live. If you be peaceable men, let one of your brethren be bound in prison, and the rest of you go your way and carry back the corn which you have bought. Bring back to me your youngest brother that I may find your words to be true, and that you may not die."

They prepared to do his bidding, and said one to another: "We deserve to suffer these things because we have sinned against our brother, seeing the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear: therefore is this affliction come upon us." And Ruben added: "Did not I ask you not to do that sin against the boy, and you would not hear me? Behold his blood is required."

Now they did not know that Joseph understood them, because he had spoken to them through an interpreter; but when he heard them speak with sorrow of his supposed death, he turned himself away a little while and wept. Soon he returned and had Simeon bound in the presence of his brothers. He then gave secret orders to his servants to fill their sacks with wheat, and to put every man's money back again into the mouth of his sack, and to give them, besides, provisions for the way. With the exception of Simeon, the rest were now permitted to load their asses and depart.

After they had got some distance on their journey, one of them opened his sack at the inn to give his beast provender, and there discovered the money which had been concealed by Joseph's servants. All were filled with astonishment and said to one another: "What is this that God hath done to us?" Troubled in mind, they continued their journey, and at length arrived safely at their father's house.

Jacob had been anxiously awaiting their return. They recounted to him all that had befallen them; and when they had finished speaking, they poured out their corn, and every man found his money tied in the mouth of his sack.

All were filled with fear and wonder, while Jacob, overwhelmed with grief, exclaimed: "You have made me to be without children: Joseph is not living, Simeon is kept in bonds, and Benjamin you will take away: all these evils are fallen upon me."

Seeing how great was his father's sorrow, Ruben said to him: "Kill my two sons if I bring not Benjamin again to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will restore him to thee." Jacob answered: "My son shall not go down with you: his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if any mischief befall him in the land, you will bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave" (Gen. xli., xlii.).

CHAPTER XXV

JOSEPH'S BRETHREN AGAIN GO DOWN INTO EGYPT

MEANTIME the famine still raged, and the corn which Jacob's sons had brought from Egypt was at length consumed. Jacob said to them: "Go again and buy us a little food." Juda replied: "The governor declared with an oath that we should not see his face again unless we brought our youngest brother with us. If, therefore, thou wilt send him with us, we will set out together, and will buy necessaries for thee; but if thou wilt not, we will not go. Send the boy, that we may set forward and may live, lest both we and our children perish. I take the boy upon me; require him at my hand. Unless I bring him again and restore him to thee, I will be guilty of sin against thee for ever."

Jacob said to them: "If it must needs be so, do what you will. Take of the best fruits of the land, and carry down presents to the man. Take with you double money, and carry back what you found in your sacks, lest perhaps it was done by mistake. Take your brother also, and go to the man, and may God make him favourable to you and send back with you your brother whom he keepeth, and this Benjamin. As for me I shall be desolate without children." The sons did as their father commanded, and again set out for Egypt.

When Joseph heard of their arrival, and that Benjamin was with them, he gave orders for a feast to be prepared, and bade the steward bring the strangers to him. They were afraid, and said to one another: "Because of the money which we carried back the first time in our sacks we are brought in that he may accuse us falsely, and by violence make slaves of us."

"Sir," they said to the steward, "we desire thee to hear us. We came down once before to buy food; and when we returned, we opened our sacks and found our money in the mouths of the sacks, nor can we tell who put it there; but we have now brought back the same amount, and other money besides to buy what we want."

The steward answered: "Peace be with you, fear not; your God, and the God of your father hath given you treasure in your sacks." He then brought out Simeon to them, and gave them water to wash their feet, and provender for their asses.

They got ready their presents; and when Joseph came into the room, they bowed down with their faces to the ground and offered them to him. He saluted them in return, and asked if their aged father was still living and in good health; then seeing Benjamin in their midst, he asked: "Is this your young brother of whom you told me?" And turning to Benjamin he said: "God be gracious to thee, my son." Feeling that he could no longer restrain his emotion, he made haste, because his heart was full. The tears began to well up in his eyes; and for fear lest his brethren should perceive his agitation, he withdrew to another apartment and wept.

After he had calmed his feelings and removed all signs of tears,

he returned and commanded his servants to set food before his brethren. Joseph himself sat at a table apart, for it was not lawful for an Egyptian to eat with Hebrews. Their astonishment was great on finding that, in assigning their places at table, Joseph arranged them according to their age, while to Benjamin he gave a portion which exceeded that of any of the others by five parts. That day they feasted and made merry.

In the meantime Joseph had given orders to the steward to fill their sacks with corn, and to put the money of each one in the top of his sack, but in the mouth of Benjamin's sack to fasten his own silver cup along with the price of the wheat (Gen. xliii., xliv.).

CHAPTER XXVI

JOSEPH MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN

EARLY the next morning Joseph's brethren took their departure; but they had not gone far on their way when they were overtaken by the steward, who accused them of having stolen his master's silver cup.

Convinced of their innocence, they said to the steward: "Why doth our lord speak so, as though thy servants had committed so wicked a crime? The money that we found in the top of our sacks we brought back to thee from the land of Chanaan: how can it be that we should steal gold or silver out of thy lord's house? With whomsoever shall be found that which thou seekest, let him die, and we will be the bondmen of my lord." The steward answered: "Let it be according to your sentence."

They speedily took down their sacks and opened them; and the steward made search, beginning with the eldest brother and ending with the youngest, and he found the cup in Benjamin's sack. In their grief Joseph's brethren rent their garments, and loading their asses again, they returned into the town.

With Juda at their head they went in to Joseph, and all prostrated themselves before him. Joseph said to them: "Why did you do so?" Juda answered: "What can we say, my lord, or what excuse can we make? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants. Behold we are all bondmen to my lord, both we and he with whom the cup was found." Joseph replied: "God forbid that I should do so; he that stole the cup shall be my bondman. Go you away to your father."

Then Juda, coming nearer, said boldly: "I beseech thee, my lord, let thy servant speak a word in thy ears, and be not angry with me. Thou didst command us to bring hither our youngest brother that thou mightest set eyes on him; and didst say that, unless he accompanied us, we should see thy face no more. This we told our father, but he, overcome with grief, said: You know that my wife Rachel bore me two sons. One went out whom you said a beast had devoured, and hitherto he hath not appeared. If you take this one also, and anything befall him in the way, you will bring down my

grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Therefore, if I shall go to thy servant our father, and the boy be wanting, he will die of sorrow. Let me be thy servant, who took him into my trust, and whom I promised to return in safety to his father. Let him go with his brethren, for I cannot return without him, lest I be a witness of the calamity that will oppress my father."

Joseph could no longer control his pent-up feelings. He bade his attendants withdraw from the room; then, left alone with his brethren, he wept aloud, and in a voice trembling with emotion, exclaimed: " I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. Be not afraid, and let it not seem to you a hard thing that you sold me into this country, for God sent me before you into Egypt for your preservation. Make haste, and go to my father, and tell him that his son Joseph is still living and lord of the whole land of Egypt: tell him to come down to me and linger not." Then falling upon the neck of Benjamin, he clasped him to his breast and wept; and Benjamin wept as he returned Joseph's fond embrace. He also embraced each of the others, and only then were they able to speak to him.

Soon the news spread to the king's palace that Joseph's brethren had come, and Pharao and all his family rejoiced. He bade Joseph send his brethren at once into the land of Chanaan and bring thence their father and kindred, and come to him in Egypt. Joseph accordingly gave them wagons and provisions for their journey, and two robes apiece; but to Benjamin he gave 300 pieces of silver with five robes of the best.

They returned with all speed to their father, and related to him all that had happened, They told him, moreover, that not only was Joseph still living, but that he was ruler over all the land of Egypt. When Jacob heard this, he awakened as it were out of a deep sleep, yet he did not believe them; but when he saw the wagons and all that Joseph had sent, his spirits revived, and he said: " It is enough if my son Joseph be yet alive: I will go and see him before I die " (Gen. xliv., xlv.).

CHAPTER XXVII

JACOB GOES TO EGYPT—DEATH OF JOSEPH, B.C. 1635

Jacob at once began to make preparations for his journey and gathered together all his possessions. He left Hebron, and arriving at Bersabee, he there offered sacrifice to the God of his father. In the night he had a vision in which God appeared to him and said: " I am the most mighty God of thy father: fear not, go down into Egypt, for I will make a great nation of thee there. Thither will I go down with thee, and will bring thee back again; Joseph also shall put his hands upon thy eyes."

Rising up from the *well of oath,* and taking with him his eleven sons and their wives and children, in all to the number of seventy, he went down into Egypt. Juda was sent in advance to tell Joseph of his

father's coming, and to request that he would meet him in the land of Gessen.

As soon as Joseph saw his father coming in the distance, he descended from his chariot and advanced on foot to meet him. They tenderly embraced each other, and for a time were unable to utter a word, so great was their emotion from the joy of their reunion. When at length Jacob found voice to speak, he said to Joseph: "Now shall I die with joy because I have seen thy face, and shall leave thee alive."

Being brought by Joseph and presented to the king, Jacob blessed Pharao, and to Pharao's inquiry concerning his age replied: "The days of my pilgrimage are 130 years, few and evil, and they are not come up to the days of the pilgrimage of my fathers."

Pharao said to Joseph: "The land of Egypt is before thee. Make thy father and thy brethren dwell in the best place, and give them the land of Gessen. And if thou knowest that there are industrious men among them, make them rulers over my cattle."

The remaining seventeen years of his life Jacob spent in the land of Gessen: and when at length he felt the day of his death drawing nigh, he called Joseph to him and said: "If I have found favour in thy sight, thou shalt show me this kindness and truth, not to bury me in Egypt; but I will sleep with my fathers and thou shalt bury me in the burying-place of my ancestors."

Later, when Joseph heard that his father was failing fast, he hastened to his bedside, taking with him his two sons, Manasses and Ephraim. As Joseph entered the room, the dying patriarch raised himself on his couch to welcome him. And he said to him: "Thy two sons shall be mine: Ephraim and Manasses shall be reputed to me as Ruben and Simeon. Bring them to me that I may bless them."

To receive their grandfather's blessing Manasses was placed on the right hand and Ephraim on the left; but Jacob, crossing his hands, placed his right hand on the head of Ephraim, the younger brother, and his left on the head of Manasses. Joseph was troubled at this and tried to place his father's right hand on the head of his elder son, saying: "This is the first-born; put thy right hand upon his head." But Jacob answered: "I know, my son, I know; and this also shall become a great people; but his younger brother shall be greater than he."

Jacob then called all his sons, and bidding them hearken to the last words of Israel, their father, he foretold to each what would befall his descendants.

Ruben, for having sinned with Bala, was not to inherit the privileges that usually belonged to the first-born—viz., the being prince over his other brethren, and the priesthood.

To Simeon and Levi he said: "I will divide them in Jacob and will scatter them in Israel." This he said because of their cruelty and deceit in slaying Sichem, the son of Hemor, with all his people.

To Juda he assigned the princely office, and foretold that from

him should be born the Messias: "*The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda till He come that is to be sent, and He shall be the expectation of nations.*" In the tribe of Juda, then, to the exclusion of all others, the Messias was henceforth to be sought.

Jacob continued thus to foretell to his sons what was to be their lot, and to each he gave a particular blessing. Then he said to all: "I am going to be gathered to my people: bury me with my fathers in the double cave which is over against Mambre, in the land of Chanaan." He then drew up his feet upon the bed and died at the age of 147 years.

When Joseph saw that his father was dead, he fell upon his face and, kissing him fervently, wept. He had the body embalmed; and, accompanied by his brethren and the elders of the land of Egypt, he conveyed it into the land of Chanaan for burial as Jacob had commanded him.

Joseph's brethren now began to fear lest he might take vengeance on them for the wrongs they had done him. When Joseph learnt this, he wept and assured them that they need have no fear, saying: "You thought evil against me, but God turned it into good, that He might exalt me, and save my people." Thus did he speak gently to them and at the same time promised to support them and their children.

He lived to see the children of Ephraim to the third generation, and the grandchildren also of Manasses; and when he knew that his end was near, he said to his brethren: "After my death God will make you to go out of this land to the land which He promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Then, having enjoined them to carry his bones with them when they should go out of Egypt, he died at the age of 110 years, and was embalmed and laid in a coffin (Gen. xlvi.–l.).

In many circumstances of his life Joseph was one of the most beautiful figures of the Messias. Joseph was sold by his brethren for twenty pieces of silver; for thirty pieces of silver did Judas, one of the chosen disciples of our Saviour, betray his heavenly Master. Joseph was condemned for a crime of which he was innocent; our Saviour was condemned by a judge who even declared Him to be innocent. Joseph, after his betrayal, saved his brethren; Jesus Christ, after the treachery of Judas, died to save mankind. In his goodness of heart Joseph forgave the cruel wrongs done to him by his brethren; our Saviour not only forgave His executioners, but offered to His eternal Father His own most precious blood for their and our salvation.

THE BOOK OF JOB

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE SUFFERINGS AND PATIENCE OF JOB

THOUGH not a Jew, Job was a believer in the true God, and, after the manner of the patriarchs, was a priest and ruler in his own family. He was a man innocent, sincere, and without guile, and one who feared and avoided sin. The time when he lived is uncertain.

Job dwelt in the land of Hus, which was a part of Edom. He had seven sons and three daughters, and his flocks and herds were numbered by their thousands.

When he was at the height of his prosperity, God allowed the devil to afflict him by causing him to lose all that he possessed. On a certain day a servant came hurrying into his presence, and said: "The oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them, when the Sabeans rushed in, and took all away, and slew the servants with the sword. I alone have escaped to tell thee."

Now while the man was yet speaking, another came in and said: "The fire of God fell from heaven, and striking the sheep and the servants, consumed them. I alone have escaped to tell thee."

A third messenger came announcing the loss of his camels, and the slaughter of his servants who were in charge of them.

Yet a fourth was the bearer of tidings still more terrible: "Thy sons and daughters were feasting in the house of their eldest brother when a violent wind came on a sudden from the side of the desert, and shook the four corners of the house, which fell upon and killed them."

In token of his deep grief, Job rent his garments; yet he murmured not, but prostrated himself in adoration before God, saying: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done; blessed be the name of the Lord." Therefore, in all these things, Job sinned not by his lips, nor spoke he any foolish thing against God.

Satan next sought permission of God to afflict Job in his person, which request was granted provided that his life should be spared. The devil accordingly struck Job with a terrible ulcer which covered his body from the sole of his foot to the top of his head. In this pitiable condition he went out of the house and sat upon a dunghill, where he scraped away the corrupt matter with a potsherd.

Seeing him thus occupied, his wife stood before him, and chiding him for his simplicity, bade him curse God and die. He said to her: "Thou hast spoken like one of the foolish women. If we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil?" Again Job sinned not with his lips.

Three of his friends, Eliphaz, Baldad, and Sophar, came together

to condole with him in his sorrow; but when they saw his sufferings, their grief was too great for utterance. For seven days they remained with him, till at last Eliphaz, believing such afflictions must be in punishment of some secret crime, said to him: "Remember, I pray thee, whoever perished being innocent? or when were the just destroyed? On the contrary, I have seen those who work iniquity and sow sorrows perish by the blast of God. Sorrow doth not spring out of the ground. Call now, if there be any that will answer thee, and turn to some of the saints."

For a time Job bore the reproaches of Eliphaz in silence, but at length replied: "Teach me, and I will hold my peace; and if I have been ignorant of anything, instruct me. Why have you detracted the words of truth, whereas there is none of you that can reprove me? You dress up speeches only to rebuke, and endeavour to overthrow your friend."

Under the pretence of defending the justice of God, Baldad also accused Job, and exhorted him to repentance; and in like manner did Sophar, who reproved him, too, for justifying himself.

Job complained of the cruelty of his friends, but consoled himself by his unshaken faith in the coming of the Messias, and in a future resurrection: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God, whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold; and not another. This my hope is laid up in my bosom" (Job xix. 25-27).

After the three men had ceased reproaching Job, there came a fourth, named Eliu, who even went so far as to charge him with blasphemy. God Himself now interposed on behalf of His servant. He first consoled Job, then turned in indignation against his false friends. He said to Eliphaz: "My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy friends, because you have not spoken the thing that is right before Me, as My servant Job hath. Take unto you, therefore, seven oxen and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer for yourselves a holocaust. He shall pray for you: his face I will accept, that folly be not imputed to you." They did as God commanded, and were pardoned at the prayer of Job.

God then restored Job to health, and blessed him with riches beyond what he had possessed before. Other sons and daughters were born to him, equalling in number those whom he had lost, and he lived to see his children's children to the fourth generation.

THE BOOK OF EXODUS

EXODUS, *the name given to the second Book of Moses, means* A GOING OUT *or* DEPARTURE. *The Book contains the history of the departure of the Israelites from the land of Egypt, and covers a period of* 145 *years.*

CHAPTER XXIX

THE EGYPTIAN CAPTIVITY—BIRTH OF MOSES

B.C. 1571

AFTER the death of Joseph and his brethren, the children of Israel increased exceedingly, and soon became very numerous in the land. Now it came to pass that there arose a king over Egypt who knew not Joseph; and he said to his people: "Behold the children of Israel are more numerous and stronger than we. Come let us oppress them, lest they multiply, and if any war shall arise against us, depart out of the land."

He accordingly set over them taskmasters, who loaded them with heavy burdens, and caused them to toil as slaves in the public works. Their lives were made bitter by all manner of hard service, but the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and increased.

When Pharao found that his plan for exterminating them was of no avail, he gave orders to the midwives to kill all the male children of the Hebrews as soon as they were born. But the midwives, who were God-fearing women, found some excuse for not carrying out the king's commands, and God blessed them for their goodness.

The king was very angry, and published a decree that all the new-born sons of the Hebrews should be cast into the river Nile, but that the daughters should be spared.

Now Amram, the grandson of Levi, had married a woman of the same tribe, and at this time had two children, a son named Aaron, and a daughter Miriam or Mary. Their next child was a son, whom his mother succeeded in concealing for three months. When she found it no longer possible to keep his birth a secret, she made a basket of bulrushes, and smearing the inside with pitch to keep out the water, laid her child therein, and carried it down to the river. She then placed the basket among the reeds by the brink of the water, and stationed Miriam a short distance away to see what might befall.

It so chanced that Pharao's daughter came to bathe at the same spot, accompanied by her maids; and seeing the basket, she ordered one of them to fetch it to her. She opened it, and was astonished to find in it an infant, who immediately began to cry. Moved with pity she said, "This is one of the babes of the Hebrews;" and she resolved to rear it as her own.

By this time Miriam had come up to the wondering group; and

when she saw that the princess's feelings were moved towards the child, she asked if she might call a Hebrew woman to nurse it. "Go," said the princess; and at once the girl hastened to her mother, and soon the two arrived at the spot.

The princess said to the mother: "Take this child and nurse him for me, and I will give thee thy wages." The woman took and nursed the child, and when he was grown up she brought him to Pharao's daughter, who treated him as her own son and called his name Moses, that is, *saved from the water*. She had him brought up at the Court of Pharao and instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Exod. i., ii.).

CHAPTER XXX

FLIGHT AND MISSION OF MOSES

Moses did not forget the cruel sufferings to which his brethren were daily exposed. On one occasion he saw an Egyptian cruelly beating one of the Hebrews, and threw himself upon the heartless wretch; then looking this way and that to see if there was any help near, but finding none, he struck the Egyptian and killed him on the spot. He buried the body in the sand, never thinking but that the deed would remain a secret.

Going out the next day he found two Hebrews quarrelling, and said to the wrong-doer: "Why strikest thou thy neighbour?" The man replied: "Who hath appointed thee prince and judge over us? Wilt thou kill me as thou didst the Egyptian?"

Moses was struck with fear on finding that his act was thus publicly known; and when he learnt that it had even come to Pharao's ear, and that the king sought his life, he resolved to flee without delay. He sought refuge in the country of Madian, in the peninsula of Sinai.

One day, when Moses had seated himself beside a well, the seven daughters of Jethro, the priest of Madian, approached to water their flocks, but were rudely driven away by some Arabian shepherds. At once he rose up in defence of the maidens, and helped them to draw water. Surprised to find that they returned that day earlier than usual, their father asked the reason. They answered him: "A man of Egypt delivered us from the hands of the shepherds; and he drew the water also with us, and gave the sheep to drink." "Where is he?" he asked. "Why have you let the man go? Call him that he may eat bread."

When Moses came, he was received with great kindness, and agreed to remain with Jethro and tend his flocks. Here he spent the next forty years of his life, and having married Sephora, one of Jethro's daughters, he became the father of two sons, Gersam and Eliezer.

In the meantime the king from whom Moses had fled died, but the oppression of the Israelites still went on. In their anguish they cried to God, who had pity on them, and remembered the covenant which He had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

While Moses was on one occasion in charge of his father-in-law's flocks, he drove them to the inner parts of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, Horeb. Here his attention was attracted by a wonderful sight. The Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush, and Moses saw that the bush was on fire without being consumed.

Struck with astonishment, Moses approached to see what the marvel might be, but was still more filled with awe when he heard the voice of the Lord calling him by name from the midst of the bush. God said to him: "Come not nigh hither; put off the shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

Moses hid his face, for he durst not look upon God. The voice continued: "I have seen the affliction of My people in Egypt, and I have heard their cry; and knowing their sorrow, I am come down to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them into a land that floweth with milk and honey. I will send thee to Pharao that thou mayest bring forth My people out of Egypt."

"Who am I," said Moses, "that I should go to Pharao, and should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" God said to him: "I will be with thee, and this thou shalt have for a sign that I have sent thee: when thou shalt have brought My people out of Egypt, thou shalt offer sacrifice upon this mountain." Moses said: "Lo, I shall go to the children of Israel and say to them: The God of your fathers hath sent me to you. If they shall say to me: What is His name? what shall I say to them?" God said to him: "I AM WHO AM. Thus shalt thou say to the children of Irsael: HE WHO IS hath sent me to you."

The Lord next bade Moses go and gather together the ancients of Israel and make known to them the instructions he had received. "I know," He added, "that the King of Egypt will not let you go but by a mighty hand; for I will stretch forth My hand, and I will strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in the midst of them: After these things he will let you go."

Moses answered: "They will not believe me, nor hear my voice, but will say: The Lord hath not appeared to thee."

Then God said to him: "What is that thou holdest in thy hand?" He answered: "A rod." God said: "Cast it down upon the ground." He cast it down, and it was turned into a serpent, so that Moses in alarm fled from it. The Lord said to him: "Put out thy hand and take it by the tail." Moses did so, and it was turned into a rod.

Again the Lord said: "Put thy hand into thy bosom." And after he had done so, he brought it forth leprous as snow. God said to him: "Put back thy hand into thy bosom." He put it back, and brought it out again, and it was like the other flesh. Then God said: "If they will not believe thee, nor pay heed to the former sign, they will believe the latter sign. But if they will not even regard these two signs, nor hear thy voice, take of the river water, and pour it out upon the dry land; and whatever thou drawest out of the river shall be turned into blood."

Moses next pleaded his want of eloquence and slowness of speech. The Lord said to him: "Who made man's mouth? Did not I? Go, therefore, and I will be in thy mouth, and I will teach thee what thou shalt speak." Even yet Moses begged that another might be sent in his stead.

Then the Lord was angry with him and said: "Aaron the Levite is thy brother, and I know that he is eloquent; behold he cometh forth to meet thee. Speak to him, and put My words in his mouth. He shall speak in thy stead to the people. Take this rod in thy hand, wherewith thou shalt do the signs."

Moses rose up and returned to Jethro, to whom he declared his intention of once more visiting his native land. He took with him his wife and his sons and went into Egypt, carrying the rod of God in his hand. As God had foretold, he was met by his brother; and after he had explained to him all the commands of God, they assembled the ancients of Israel, and wrought the signs in sight of all the people. The people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and had looked upon their affliction, they fell down and adored (Exod. ii.-iv.).

PART III

FROM THE DELIVERY OF THE HEBREWS OUT OF EGYPT TO THE DEATH OF MOSES

B.C. 1491 TO B.C. 1451

CHAPTER XXXI

MOSES AND AARON STAND BEFORE PHARAO

MOSES and Aaron presented themselves before Pharao, and sought permission for the Hebrews to go out a three days' journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifice as the Lord God of Israel had commanded. But he answered: "Who is the Lord that I should hear his voice, or let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." He then gave orders to the overseers and taskmasters to lay new burdens upon the Hebrews.

The straw which had to be mixed with the clay in making bricks had till now been provided, but henceforth the supply was to be stopped, and the Israelites were required to gather it for themselves; yet the taskmasters demanded the usual number of bricks. Thus, while some continued at the works, others went about the fields to gather every particle of chaff and piece of straw that they could find.

The officers of the children of Israel came and complained to Pharao: "Why dealest thou so with thy servants? Straw is not given us, and bricks are required of us as before: behold we thy servants are beaten with whips, and thy people are dealt with unjustly." The king turned a deaf ear to their complaint and said: "You are idle, and therefore you say: Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord."

The people now turned against Moses and Aaron and accused them of being the cause of the evils that had come upon them. Moses was filled with distress and besought the Lord, saying: "Lord, why hast thou afflicted this people? Wherefore hast Thou sent me? For since the time that I went in to Pharao to speak in Thy name, he hath afflicted Thy people, and Thou hast not delivered them." The Lord answered him: "Now thou shalt see what I will do to Pharao; for by a mighty hand shall he let them go. And I will take you to Myself for My people: I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord." Moses told this to the children of Israel, but they did not hearken to him because of their anguish of spirit.

God then bade Moses and Aaron go a second time and demand the deliverance of His people. The king asked them for a sign of their mission. Turning to Aaron, Moses bade him cast down his rod. Aaron did so, and immediately it was changed into a serpent.

Pharao's magicians threw down their rods also, which likewise became serpents; and although Aaron's rod swallowed up those of the magicians, the king would not be convinced, and refused to let the people go (Exod. v.-vii.).

CHAPTER XXXII

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT

HITHERTO God's punishments had been withheld from Pharao. Plagues were now to win from him the consent which had been denied to words and signs. The *first* plague God sent was the *Plague of Blood*. He commanded Aaron to take the rod, and with it to strike the waters of the river in Pharao's presence. He obeyed; and immediately the waters of the rivers and streams and pools, and all the ponds of waters were turned into blood; and blood ran in all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and of stone. This miracle lasted seven days, during which time the Egyptians procured water by digging wells round about the river. Once more the king's magicians successfully imitated the wonders performed by Moses, and again Pharao hardened his heart and would not let the Israelites go.

The *second* plague was the *Plague of Frogs*. Directed by God, Aaron stretched forth his hand upon the waters of Egypt, and frogs came up and covered the land. They entered into the houses and beds of the Egyptians, even into the rooms and on to the bed of Pharao himself. Again the magicians performed a similar wonder; but when they were unable to take the frogs away, Pharao called Moses and Aaron to him and said: "Pray to the Lord to take away the frogs from me and from my people, and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the Lord." Moses asked the king to assign a day for their removal. He willingly consented, and appointed the next day. Moses prayed to the Lord and no sooner was the plague removed than Pharao hardened his heart and refused to keep his promise.

The *third* plague was the *Plague of Sciniphs*. These were small flying insects very troublesome to men and beasts. When Aaron, at the command of God, struck the dust of the earth with his rod, there came sciniphs upon men and beasts. Even the very dust was turned into sciniphs in all the land of Egypt. The magicians failing to imitate this miracle, said to Moses: "This is the finger of God." Still Pharao would not yield.

The *fourth* plague was the *Plague of Flies*. God said to Moses: "Arise early and say to Pharao: Thus saith the Lord God: Let My people go to sacrifice to Me. But if thou wilt not let them go, behold I will send upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy houses, all manner of flies. And I will make the land of Gessen wonderful in that day, so that flies shall not be there, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth." God's threat was carried out, and Egypt was covered with every kind of fly, which settled upon men and beasts. Upon this, Pharao's heart began to

relent. He said to Moses: " Go and sacrifice to your God in this land." Moses answered: " It cannot be so. We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and will sacrifice to the Lord our God as He commanded us." Pharao said to him: " I will let you go to the Lord your God in the wilderness, but go no further: pray for me." Moses prayed for the king, and there remained not a single fly. At once Pharao hardened his heart, and would not let the Israelites go.

The *fifth* plague was the *Plague of the Murrain* among the cattle of Egypt. Moses said to the king: " If thou wilt not let the people go, behold a grievous murrain shall be upon thy horses, and asses, and camels, and oxen, and sheep. To-morrow will the Lord do this thing in the land." Moses' words came true the following day. Great numbers of the beasts of the Egyptians died, but not one of those that belonged to the children of Israel. Yet Pharao would not let the people go.

The *sixth* plague was the *Plague of Boils and Blains*, which affected not only the Egyptians themselves, but their cattle also. At the command of God, Moses and Aaron took ashes and sprinkled them in the air before Pharao, and there came boils and swelling blains on men and beasts alike; nor could the magicians stand before Pharao for the boils that were upon them. Still Pharao would not yield.

The *seventh* plague was the *Plague of Hail*. After warning Pharao to gather his people and cattle into shelter, Moses, commanded by God, stretched forth his rod towards heaven, and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and lightnings running along the ground; and the hail and fire mixed with it drove on together. All things that were left in the fields, and aii those who had disregarded the warning of Moses were destroyed. The hail even smote every herb of the field, and broke the trees of the country. Only in the land of Gessen the hail fell not. In his terror, Pharao sent for Moses and said to him: " I have sinned this time also; the Lord is just, I and my people are wicked. Pray that the thunderings of God may cease that I may let you go." Moses prayed to the Lord, and the thunders and the hail ceased; but the heart of Pharao was again hardened.

The *eighth* plague was the *Plague of Locusts*. So fearful had the Egyptians become owing to their many sufferings, that the courtiers even ventured to appear before the king, and urged him to let the Israelites go. Pharao so far yielded as to promise to let the men go to sacrifice in the wilderness if only their wives and children remained behind. Moses would not consent to this, and was driven from Pharao's presence. At the command of God he stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt. Thereupon the Lord brought a burning wind all that day and night; and the next morning there appeared great swarms of locusts, which came over the whole land, and on all the coasts of the Egyptians. The grass of the earth was devoured; whatever fruits the hail had left on the trees were destroyed; and in all Egypt there remained nothing that was green on the trees, or in the herbs of the earth. In haste Pharao sent for Moses and Aaron and said to them: " I have sinned; but now forgive me my sin

this time also, and pray to the Lord to take away from me this death." At the prayer of Moses the locusts were carried away by a strong wind into the Red Sea, and immediately the heart of the king was hardened.

The *ninth* plague was the *Plague of Darkness*. God said to Moses: "Stretch out thy hand towards heaven; and may there be darkness upon Egypt so thick that it may be felt." Moses did so; and so terrible was the darkness that came upon the land that no man saw his brother, nor moved out of the place where the darkness had overtaken him; but where the children of Israel dwelt there was light. Then Pharao said to Moses: "Go sacrifice to the Lord. Let your sheep only and herds remain; let your children go with you." Moses said to him: "All the flocks shall go with us, for they are necessary for the service of the Lord our God." Pharao again hardened his heart and said to Moses: "Get thee from me, and beware that thou see not my face any more: in what day soever thou shalt come in my sight, thou shalt die." Moses answered: "So shall it be as thou hast spoken. I will not see thy face any more" (Exod. vii.-x.).

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN

The *tenth* and last plague was the *Death of the First-Born*. The Lord appeared to Moses and said: "Yet one plague more will I bring upon Pharao and Egypt, and after that he shall let you go, and thrust you out. Therefore thou shalt tell the people that every man ask of his friend, and every woman of her neighbour, vessels of silver and gold. At midnight I will enter into Egypt, and every first-born in the land of the Egyptians shall die, from the first-born of Pharao who sitteth on his throne, even to the first-born of the handmaid that is at the mill, and all the first-born of beasts. On the tenth day of this month let every man take a lamb by families and houses; but if the number be less than may suffice to eat it, he shall take unto him his neighbour. The lamb shall be without blemish, a male of one year; and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the month, when the whole multitude of the children of Israel shall sacrifice it in the evening. The blood of the lamb they shall take and sprinkle upon both the side-posts and on the upper door-posts of the houses wherein they shall eat it. They shall roast the flesh that same night at the fire, and eat it with unleavened bread and wild lettuce; neither shall there be anything left until morning. If there be anything left, you shall burn it with fire. You shall have your loins girt, and shoes on your feet, holding staves in your hands; for it is the Phase (*the Passage*) of the Lord. And I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will kill every first-born in Egypt; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments. I am the Lord. The blood shall be unto you for a sign. I shall see the blood, and shall pass over you. This day shall be for a memorial to you, and you shall keep it a feast to the Lord in your generations with an everlasting observance."

At midnight after the fourteenth day the destroying angel passed through the land of Egypt, and slew the first-born in every house that was not sprinkled with the blood of the lamb. A loud cry of anguish arose throughout the land, for there was not a house wherein there lay not one dead.

Pharao arose in the darkness of the night, and sending for Moses and Aaron, said to them: "Go, sacrifice to the Lord as you say. Your sheep and herds take along with you as you demanded, and departing, bless me." The Egyptians pressed upon the Israelites to go forth with all speed out of their land lest they too should die. The vessels of gold and silver asked of them they gladly gave, as well as their most costly raiment.

The children of Israel set out, to the number of 600,000 men, besides women and children; and carrying with them the bones of Joseph, they turned their steps in the direction of Socoth.

To commemorate the death of the first-born, God commanded the Israelites henceforth to consecrate to Him the first-born male of man and beast. Every first-born of man must be redeemed with a price. Of animals, those that were impure were to be redeemed or killed; those that were pure, as the offspring of sheep or cattle, were to be offered in sacrifice (Exod. xi.-xiii.).

The Paschal Lamb was a figure of Jesus Christ, the Immaculate Lamb of God, who having redeemed us by His death, gives Himself to us as our food in the Blessed Eucharist.

A striking figure of our redemption by the blood of Jesus Christ was the sprinkling of the door-posts of the Israelites with the blood of the Paschal Lamb that the people might be delivered from the sword of the destroying angel. All those souls that are marked with the blood of Christ worthily received will be spared by our Saviour when He shall come to destroy the wicked.

CHAPTER XXXIV

PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA

After Pharao had at length allowed the Israelites to go, the Lord showed them the way they were to follow, in the day by a Pillar of Cloud, and in the night by a Pillar of Fire. In all their wanderings these columns of cloud and fire went before them.

When Pharao learnt that all the Israelites had set out, he exclaimed: "What meant we to do, that we let Israel go from serving us?" And hearing, after three days, that they were still near the sea, he got ready his horsemen and chariots and went out in pursuit. On the border of the Red Sea he came up with them.

At sight of the Egyptian hosts the Israelites were struck with fear, and cried to Moses: "Perhaps there were no graves in Egypt: therefore thou hast brought us to die in the wilderness. It was much better to serve the Egyptians than to die here." Moses said to them: "Fear not; stand and see the great wonders of the Lord which He will

do this day; for the Egyptians whom you see now you shall see no more for ever. The Lord will fight for us."

The angel of the Lord who went before the Israelites in the Pillar of Cloud now passed to their rear, thus separating the Egyptians from the camp of Israel. To the Egyptians it was a dark cloud, but it enlightened the night to the Israelites, and shone on them with great brightness.

God said to Moses: "Lift thou up thy rod, and stretch forth thy hand over the sea, and divide it, that the children of Israel may go through the midst of the sea on dry land." Moses did so; and immediately the Lord sent a burning wind which blew all night and divided the water so that it became as a wall on the right hand and on the left, while in the midst there was left a dry passage which stretched to the opposite shore. Through this the Israelites crossed over in safety.

In his eagerness to come up with them, Pharao also rushed with all his army into this fatal pass. But when the morning watch was come the Lord opened the eyes of the Egyptians, who in terror cried out: "Let us flee from Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them against us."

The Lord said to Moses: "Stretch forth thy hand over the sea that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and horsemen." Moses obeyed; and the waters began to return so quickly to their former place that the Egyptians were swallowed up by the waves. Pharao was drowned, together with his horsemen and his whole army. There did not so much as one remain.

Then Moses and the children of Israel sang a canticle to the Lord: "Let us sing to the Lord, for He is gloriously magnified: the horse and the rider He hath thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my praise, and He is become salvation to me: He is my God, and I will glorify Him: the God of my father, and I will exalt Him. Thy right hand, O Lord, is magnified in strength: Thy right hand, O Lord, hath slain the enemy. Who is like to Thee among the strong, O Lord? Who is like to Thee, glorious in holiness, terrible and praiseworthy, doing wonders?" The song was begun by Mary, the sister of Moses, who went forth followed by the rest of the women, dancing and sounding their timbrels (Exod. xiii.-xv.).

The captivity of Israel under Pharao was a figure of our captivity under the dominion of Satan. The Pillars of Fire and Cloud represented faith; the passage of the Red Sea, baptism; their wandering in the desert, the pilgrimage of this life; and the land of promise, heaven.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE WATERS OF MARA—THE MANNA

After leaving the shores of the Red Sea the Israelites wandered three days in the desert without finding water. At length they came upon abundance of water; yet so bitter was it that they could

not drink it, whereupon Moses called the place Mara (*bitterness*). Here the people murmured against him and said: "What shall we drink?" At the command of God, Moses cast a tree into the waters, and straightway they were sweetened, so that the people could drink.

At Mara God renewed His promise to Israel, saying: "If thou wilt hear the voice of thy God, and do what is right before Him, none of the evils that I laid upon Egypt will I lay upon thee; for I am the Lord thy healer."

In the desert of Sinai all the multitude again murmured against Moses and said: "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat over the flesh-pots and ate bread to the full. Why have you brought us into the desert to destroy all the multitude with famine?" The Lord said to Moses: "I will rain bread from heaven for you. Let the people go forth and gather what is sufficient for every day, that I may prove them whether they will walk in My law or not."

Moses and Aaron said to the children of Israel: "In the evening you shall know that the Lord hath brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, for He hath heard your murmurings. Your murmuring is not against us, but against the Lord."

That same evening the Lord sent into the camp a dense flight of quails, of which the people killed as many as they chose; and on the following morning there appeared on the ground a small round substance, white and crisp, which at first sight seemed to resemble hoar-frost. When the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another: "Manhu?" (*what is this?*) for they knew not what it was. Moses said to them: "This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat. Let everyone gather of it as much as is enough to eat, and let no man leave thereof till the morning."

Now many there were who disregarded the command of Moses and kept some till the following day, when, to their surprise, they found that it was corrupt and unfit for food. Moses was angry with them and chided them for their disobedience.

Each morning, before sunrise, everyone had to gather as much of the manna as would suffice for the day; for when the sun grew hot, what was left on the ground melted away. On the sixth day, however. all were required to gather double the usual quantity, for on the Sabbath no manna was to be found.

Moses said to the people: "To-morrow is the rest of the Sabbath, sanctified to the Lord. Whatsoever work is to be done, do it; and the meats that are to be dressed, dress them; and whatsoever shall remain, lay it up until the morning." The people did as Moses commanded; and the manna did not putrefy, but remained sound and sweet throughout the seventh day.

At the command of God, Moses bade Aaron take a vessel and put manna into it, as much as a gomor (*seven pints*) would hold, and lay it up before the Lord, to be preserved unto future generations,

that the people might remember the bread wherewith the Lord had fed them in the wilderness. Before the Ark was made, Aaron put the vessel in the tabernacle where the Israelites met to pray.

For forty years did the children of Israel eat manna, until, arriving on the borders of Chanaan, they came to a habitable land (Exod. xv., xvi.).

The wood which made the waters of Mara sweet was a figure of the Cross, which renders all our sufferings sweet and easy to bear for Christ's sake.

The manna was a figure of the true Bread descended from heaven, the Bread of angels, which we receive in the Blessed Sacrament for the food and nourishment of our souls during the time of our mortal pilgrimage. The manna took the place of every kind of food; the Blessed Sacrament suffices for all the needs of our soul. The manna ceased when the Israelites entered the promised land; the Holy Eucharist will cease when we enter heaven, the true land of promise.

CHAPTER XXXVI

DEFEAT OF THE AMALECITES

SETTING forth from the desert of Sin the Israelites next came to Raphidim, where there was no water for the people to drink. Here again they murmured against Moses, saying: "Why didst thou make us go forth out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our beasts with thirst?"

Moses cried to the Lord: "What shall I do to this people? Yet a little more and they will stone me." The Lord said to him: "Go before the people, and take with thee of the ancients of Israel; and take in thy hand the rod wherewith thou didst strike the river. Behold I will stand there before thee upon the rock Horeb; and thou shalt strike the rock and water shall come out of it, that the people may drink."

Moses no sooner struck the rock in the presence of the ancients than water in abundance gushed forth, so that the people drank and were satisfied. But because of the chiding of the people of Israel, and because in that spot they tempted the Lord, Moses named the place *Temptation*.

It was while the Israelites were encamped at Raphidim that they were attacked by the Amalecites. Moses bade Josue choose out the most courageous of the people and march against the enemy.

With a select body of men Josue accordingly marched forth to battle, while Moses, with the rod of God in his hand, and accompanied by Aaron and Hur, went to the top of a neighbouring hill to pray for the Israelites. Here, with arms extended, Moses prayed; and as long as his arms remained uplifted, Israel was victorious; but if he let them down a little, Amalec prevailed.

When at length his arms grew heavy from weariness, Aaron

and Hur put under him a stone on which to sit; and standing on each side of him, they held up his arms till sunset, by which time the Amalecites were put to rout, and the Israelites returned victorious to the camp. A record of this victory was, by God's command, to be handed down from generation to generation. On the site of the battle Moses built an altar, and called the place *The Lord is my Exaltation.*

When Jethro, the priest of Madian, and father-in-law of Moses, heard of all the things which God had done for the Israelites, and that He had brought them out of Egypt, he took Sephora, the wife of Moses, and her two sons, Gersam and Eliezer, and came with them to Moses into the desert, where he was encamped by the mountain of God. And Jethro rejoiced with him, saying: "Blessed is the Lord who hath delivered His people out of the land of Egypt. Now I know that the Lord is great above all gods."

The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and was occupied from morning till night settling the disputes that had arisen among them. Seeing this, and knowing the work to be above his strength, Jethro counselled Moses to share his authority with able men, who feared God, and loved justice; and to let them judge the lesser matters, leaving the more important to be disposed of by himself. This wise suggestion Moses promised to carry out, after which Jethro took leave of him and went back into his own country (Exod. xvii., xviii.).

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE LAW GIVEN ON MOUNT SINAI, B.C. 1491

In the third month after the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt they came into the wilderness of Sinai, and pitched their tents over against the mountain. There the Lord called to Moses from the mountain and said: "Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: You have seen what I have done to the Egyptians, how I have carried you on the wings of eagles, and have taken you to Myself. If therefore you will hear My voice, and keep My covenant, you shall be My peculiar possession above all people: for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation." Moses repeated to the ancients all that the Lord had said, and the people all answered together: "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."

Again God spoke to Moses, saying: "Lo, now will I come to thee in the darkness of a cloud, that the people may hear Me speaking to thee, and may believe thee for ever. Go to them, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their garments; and let them be ready against the third day, for on the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai."

At the command of God Moses next appointed around the foot of the mountain certain limits, which he forbade the people to cross.

and at the same time pronounced this warning: "Take heed ye go not up into the mount: everyone that toucheth the mount, dying he shall die. No hands shall touch him, but he shall be stoned to death, or shall be shot through with arrows: whether it be beast or man, he shall not live."

As soon as the morning of the third day was come, behold thunders began to be heard, and lightning to flash, and a very thick cloud to cover the mount. And the noise of the trumpet sounded exceeding loud, and the people feared. Leading the people forth to meet God, Moses stationed them at the foot of Mount Sinai, upon which the Lord had descended in fire, while the smoke from it went up as from a furnace, and all the mount was terrible. From amidst the darkness and above the trumpet's sound was heard the voice of God calling Moses to meet Him on the top of the mountain. God said to him: "Return and charge the people lest they should have a mind to pass the limits to see the Lord, and a very great multitude shall perish. Thou shalt come up, thou and Aaron with thee; but let not the priests and the people pass the limits." Then out of the midst of the fire and cloud the Lord spoke these words:

"I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them. I am the Lord thy God, mighty and jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands to them that love Me and keep My commandments.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain.

"Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days shalt thou labour, and shalt do all thy works. But on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day, and sanctified it.

"Honour thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee.

"Thou shalt not kill.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery.

"Thou shalt not steal.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.

"Thou shalt not covet his house, nor his servants, nor his handmaid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his."

All the people heard the voices and the sound of the trumpet; they saw the flames and the smoke rising; and struck with fear they stood afar off. When Moses appeared before them, they said to him:

"Speak thou to us, and we will hear: let not the Lord speak to us lest we die." Moses said to them: "Fear not; for God is come to prove you, that having the dread of Him in you, you should not sin" (Exod. xix., xx.).

CHAPTER XXXVIII

OTHER PRECEPTS GIVEN TO MOSES

The Ten Commandments had been proclaimed by God in the hearing of the assembled people, but now He appointed Moses to make known His further commands. While the people, therefore, stood afar off, Moses was again called up into the mountain, and into the dark cloud wherein God was. Here God gave him a series of fresh precepts relating to the religious and civil duties of His people, and these He concluded with the following promises:

"Behold I will send My angel, who shall go before thee, and keep thee in thy journey, and bring thee into the land that I have prepared. Take notice of him, and hear his voice, and do not think him one to be contemned; for he will not forgive when thou hast sinned, and My name is in him. But if thou wilt hear his voice, and do all that I speak, I will be an enemy to thy enemies, and will afflict them that afflict thee, and will turn the backs of all thy enemies before thee. I will set thy bounds from the Red Sea to the sea of the Palestines, and from the desert to the river: I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hands, and I will drive them out from before you."

Moses then went down to the people and told them what God had commanded; whereupon they exclaimed: "We will do all the words of the Lord which He hath spoken." He next wrote down the precepts which he had received, and in the morning set up an altar at the foot of the mount, and twelve pillars according to the number of the tribes of Israel. After burnt-offerings and peace-offerings had been sacrificed to the Lord, Moses took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people, who renewed their promise of obedience.

God now commanded Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abiu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, to come up into the mountain; but Moses alone was allowed to draw near to the Lord. The others were to adore afar off. Here they saw the God of Israel, and under His feet, as it were, a work of sapphire stone, bright as the clear heavens. And God said to Moses: "Come up to Me into the mount, and be there; and I will give thee tables of stone, and the law, and the commandments, that thou mayest teach them." Thereupon Moses, accompanied by his minister Josue, ascended the mount of God, after directing Aaron and Hur and the ancients to govern the people in his absence. And a cloud covered the mount for six days, and the Glory of the Lord dwelt upon Sinai. On the seventh day God called Moses to enter into the midst of the cloud, where he remained forty days and forty nights; and the sight of the Glory of the Lord

was like a burning fire upon the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.

During this time God gave Moses minute instructions concerning the rites to be observed in the Divine worship, and revealed to him the pattern according to which he was to construct the Tabernacle. Again He commanded the observance of the Sabbath, and said: " It is an everlasting covenant between Me and the children of Israel, and a perpetual sign." And the Lord, when He had ended these words on Mount Sinai, gave to Moses two tables of testimony written with the finger of God (Exod. xxiv., xxxi.).

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE GOLDEN CALF

FINDING that Moses did not return to them, the people grew impatient, and said to Aaron: " Arise, make us gods that they may go before us, for as to this Moses, the man that brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what hath befallen him."

Aaron said to them: " Take the golden ear-rings from the ears of your wives, and your sons and daughters, and bring them to me."

They brought them to him; and taking the golden ear-rings, he melted them down, and fashioned thereof a molten calf, such as they had seen worshipped among the Egyptians. The people received it with joy, and cried out: " These are thy gods, O Israel, that have brought thee out of the land of Egypt."

An altar was set up to this dumb idol, and Aaron made proclamation by a crier's voice: " To-morrow is the solemnity of the Lord." In the morning the people offered holocausts and peace victims, after which they sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

Seeing their wickedness, God said to Moses: " Go, get thee down: thy people whom thou hast brought out of the land of Egypt have sinned. Having made to themselves a molten calf, they have sacrificed victims to it, and have adored it. I see that they are a stiff-necked people: let Me alone that My wrath may be enkindled against them, and that I may destroy them, and I will make of thee a great nation."

But Moses besought the Lord, saying: " Why, O Lord, is Thy indignation enkindled against Thy people whom Thou hast brought out of the land of Egypt, with great power and with a mighty hand? Let not the Egyptians say: He craftily brought them out that He might kill them in the mountains, and destroy them from the earth. Let Thy anger cease and be appeased upon the wickedness of Thy people." Moved by the prayer of Moses, God refrained from inflicting the punishment which He had decreed against His people.

Moses, attended by Josue, hastened from the mount, carrying in his hand the two tables of testimony written on both sides and made by the work of God. Struck by the shout of revelry, Josue said to Moses: " The noise of battle is heard in the camp." Moses

answered: " It is not the cry of men encouraging to fight, nor the shout of men compelling to flee; but I hear the voice of singers."

When he drew nigh to the camp, and saw the calf and the dancers, he was very angry, and in his wrath threw the tables out of his hand, and broke them at the foot of the mountain. Laying hold of the calf which they had made, he burnt it and beat it into powder, which he strewed into the water, and gave thereof to the children of Israel to drink. Then calling Aaron, he said to him: " What have these people done to thee, that thou shouldst bring upon them a most heinous sin?" Aaron said to him: " Let not my lord be offended, for thou knowest this people that they are prone to evil."

Moses now stood in the gate of the camp, and cried out in a loud voice: " If any man be on the Lord's side, let him join with me." At once all the sons of Levi gathered together and ranged themselves by his side. He said to them: " Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Put every man his sword upon his thigh. Go, and return from gate to gate through the midst of the camp, and let every man kill his brother, and friend, and neighbour." The Levites did according to the words of Moses, and there were slain that day about three-and-twenty thousand.

The next day Moses said to the people: " You have sinned a very great sin: I will go up to the Lord to try if by any means I may be able to entreat Him for your crime." Then turning to the Lord he prayed: " These people have sinned a heinous sin: I beseech Thee, either forgive them this trespass, or if Thou do not, strike me out of the book that Thou hast written." " He that hath sinned against Me," said the Lord, " shall be struck out of My book. But go thou and lead the people whither I have told thee: My angel shall go before thee."

When the people were told that the Lord would send His angel before them, but that He Himself would not go up with them because they were a stiff-necked people, and He might destroy them in the way, they were filled with grief, and gave themselves up to mourning. Moses took the tabernacle, and having pitched it without the camp afar off, he called it the *Tabernacle of the Covenant.*

Seeing that the Pillar of the Cloud came down and stood at the entrance of the tabernacle, the people worshipped at the doors of their tents. That day the Lord spoke to Moses as a man is wont to speak to his friend. And Moses said to Him: " If Thou Thyself dost not go before, bring us not out of this place: for how shall we be able to know, I and Thy people, that we have found grace in Thy sight, unless Thou walk with us?" The Lord said to him: " This word also, which thou hast spoken, will I do; for thou hast found grace before Me."

Then Moses said to the Lord: " Show me Thy glory." God said to him: " Thou canst not see My face; for man shall not see Me and live. Behold thou shalt stand upon the rock; and when My glory shall pass, I will set thee in a hole in the rock, and protect thee with my right hand till I pass." Thus was it permitted to Moses to see

something of God, not in the face, but to view Him as it were "in a glass darkly," when His face was turned from him.

God now commanded him, saying: "Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the former, and I will write upon them the words that were on the tables which thou hast broken. Be ready in the morning that thou mayest go up into Mount Sinai, and thou shalt stand with Me on the top of the mount."

Early in the morning, Moses, carrying with him the two tables of stone, went up into the mountain alone, where the Lord, having again descended in a cloud, renewed His covenant, and His commands concerning the conduct of the people, as well as the manner in which they were to worship Him. Moses was again with the Lord forty days and forty nights, during which time he neither ate nor drank.

Taking the two tables on which God had inscribed the Ten Commandments, he came down from the mountain, unconscious of any change in his countenance; but when Aaron and the people saw his face shining, and sending forth rays of light like horns, they were afraid to come near him. Moses called them and repeated to them all that the Lord had commanded; he then covered his face with a veil, which he continued to wear, except when he entered the tabernacle to speak with the Lord (Exod. xxxii.-xxxiv.).

CHAPTER XL

THE TABERNACLE

Moses next informed the people of the directions that had been given him for the construction of a Tabernacle for the Divine service. He invited everyone that was willing, and had a ready heart, to make free offerings of gold, silver, and brass, of violet and purple hangings, of fine linen, and of whatever else would be required for the Tabernacle and its furniture.

With joy the people responded to his request; and all, both men and women, with devout mind, offered gifts, that the work might be done which the Lord had commanded. In such quantities did they bring their offerings of gold and precious stones, and their rich and costly stuffs, that Moses was compelled to ask them to desist from bringing more, as the offerings already made were more than enough. He entrusted all their offerings to Beseleel and Ooliab, two skilled workers, to whom the Lord gave wisdom and understanding to know how to work artistically, and to make the things that were necessary for the use of the Sanctuary.

The *Court of the Tabernacle*, which enclosed the Tabernacle, the Altar of Holocausts, and the Brazen Laver of Purification, was an oblong space, 150 feet by 75 feet, stretching east and west. This area was enclosed by hangings, and was entered from the east; and over the entrance hung an embroidered curtain of violet, purple, and scarlet, and fine twisted linen.

The *Tabernacle* itself stood at the west end of the enclosure,

and consisted of an oblong tent, the back and sides of which were made of setim-wood overlaid with gold. Its length was 45 feet, and its breadth and height were 15 feet respectively. At its eastern end was a curtain of fine linen richly embroidered. As a covering and protection for the Tabernacle four sets of curtains, varying in richness and material, were employed.

By means of a rich veil the interior of the Tabernacle was divided into two parts of 30 feet and 15 feet, the outer chamber being called the *Sanctuary*, the inner the *Holy of Holies*.

The *Holy of Holies*, into which only the High Priest was to enter, and he but once a year, on the festival of Atonement, contained the Ark of the Covenant.

In the *Sanctuary*, on the north side, stood the *Table of Show-Bread;* on the south side the *Golden Candlestick;* and in the centre, in front of the *Holy of Holies*, was the *Altar of Incense*.

In the outer court of the Tabernacle, and situated near the entrance, stood the *Altar of Holocausts;* and between it and the Tabernacle itself was the *Brazen Laver of Purification*.

The *Ark of the Covenant* was the most sacred emblem of the religion of the Jews. It is sometimes spoken of as the *Ark of Testimony*, and contained the two Tables of the Law inscribed with the Ten Commandments. In the beginning it also contained the budding rod of Aaron (Num. xii. 10), and the golden urn of manna (Exod. xvi. 33; Heb. ix. 4); yet these latter were no longer there in Solomon's time (3 Kings viii. 9).

The Ark itself was made of setim-wood, and measured $3\frac{3}{4}$ feet in length, and $2\frac{1}{4}$ feet in height and breadth. It was overlaid within and without with the purest gold. Its cover was of solid gold, and was called the *Propitiatory* or *Mercy-Seat*. On the Propitiatory were two golden cherubim with wings extended so as to cover the Ark, and placed face to face with heads bent downwards. Here it was that Almighty God had promised to Moses to make known His will. At the four corners of the Ark were rings of pure gold through which were passed the two bars of setim-wood covered with gold, by which the Ark was to be carried.

The *Table of Show-Bread* was made of setim-wood, and was 3 feet in length, $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet in breadth, and $2\frac{1}{4}$ feet in height. It was overlaid with the purest gold, having all around a golden ledge, from which arose polished ornamental work 4 inches in height, and above this a small cornice of pure gold. For carrying purposes it was arranged like the Ark.

Dishes and bowls, censers and cups, all of the purest gold, were also prepared, and kept on or near this table; and upon it were set the *Loaves of Proposition* in presence of the Lord always.

The Loaves, which were twelve in number, and made of the finest flour without leaven, were placed in two heaps, one at each end of the Table. There they remained for a week, and then were replaced by twelve fresh ones. The Loaves that had been exposed were to be eaten by none but the priests.

The *Golden Candlestick*, with its shaft and six branches, was of the purest gold. The snuffers to trim the lamps that burned upon the branches, and the dishes for receiving the snuffings, were also of pure gold.

In the centre of the Sanctuary stood the *Altar of Incense*, on which the priests burnt sweet-smelling perfumes every morning and evening. The Altar was made of setim-wood, and was 3 feet in height, and 1½ feet in length and breadth, and from each corner of it went out horns. It was entirely overlaid with gold, and had a cornice of gold round about.

Within the Court of the Tabernacle, near the entrance, stood the *Altar of Holocausts*, 4½ feet in height, and 7½ feet in length and breadth. At each corner it had horns of brass; a grating of brass was placed on the top, and underneath this grating, in the midst of the Altar, a hearth. It had rings of brass, and bars overlaid with brass, for carrying it.

Between the altar and the veil was the *Brazen Laver* in which the priests were commanded to wash their hands and feet when they went into the Tabernacle, and when they came to the altar to offer incense on it to the Lord. The omission was punishable with death (Exod. xxxv.-xxxviii.).

This *Tabernacle*, or portable Temple, raised in the desert, as well as its sacred furniture and functions, and later the Temple of Solomon built on the same plan, but in double dimensions, had a typical meaning.

The *Show-Bread*, for example, was a figure of the Blessed Eucharist, that Heavenly Bread ever present in our churches, and daily offered to God in perpetual thanksgiving for all His graces and blessings.

The *Golden Candlestick*, with its seven lamps, which was always to give light in the House of God, was a figure of the Light of the Holy Ghost and His *sevenfold* grace in the sanctuary of the Church of Christ.

The *Holy of Holies*, with its thick veil, through which the High Priest alone, on the great day of Atonement, passed with the blood of the sacrifice, was a figure of Heaven with the throne of God surrounded by the angels, closed by sin, but to be opened again by the Blood of our Saviour, the High Priest of the New Covenant. Hence it was that, when our Saviour's sacrifice was consummated on the Cross, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain.

CHAPTER XLI

THE VESTMENTS OF THE PRIESTS

Of the priestly vestments which God commanded Moses to make, some were common to all the priests, others were peculiar to the High Priest and were passed on to his successor after his death.

Those common to all the priests were fine *linen drawers;* a long, close-fitting tunic which reached down to the feet; an embroidered *linen girdle;* and a *linen mitre*.

In addition to these the High Priest wore the *Tunic of the Ephod ;* over this the *Ephod* itself with its girdle; next the *Rational* or *Breastplate of Judgment ;* and, attached to the mitre, a gold plate on which were engraved the words *Holy to the Lord,* and which hung over the forehead of the High Priest.

The lower edge of the *Tunic of the Ephod* was beautifully ornamented with pomegranates worked in violet, purple, and scarlet, and after each pomegranate was a golden bell to give forth a tinkling sound whenever the High Priest entered or left the Sanctuary.

The *Ephod* was composed of two parts, one of which covered the back, the other the breast and upper part of the body, and was made of the most costly materials. It was gathered together at the waist by a richly embroidered girdle.

The *Rational* was of the same material as the Ephod, and consisted of a rich piece of embroidery in the form of a square, measuring a span each way. It was made double so as to resemble a bag, and placed in front of the Ephod over the breast. On the front of it were arranged twelve precious stones, each stone having the name of one of the twelve tribes engraved upon it. Within the Rational were the *Urim* and *Thummim,* signifying Illuminations and Perfections, or Doctrine and Truth. To consult Urim and Thummim was to consult God Himself, for He had promised to make known His will in important matters in this way.

Aaron and his sons were consecrated priests and appointed to officiate in the sacred ministry to which God had called them. The Priesthood was hereditary in the family of Aaron, yet, till the days of our Saviour, the new High Priest was always anointed afresh.

After all things were perfected, the Cloud covered the Tabernacle of the Testimony, and the Glory of the Lord filled it. If at any time the Cloud removed from the Tabernacle, the children of Israel went forth by their troops; but if it hung over, they remained in the same place (Exod. xxxix., xl.).

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

This Book is called Leviticus because it explains the sacrifices, and the ordination of the Priests and the Levites. It treats, too, of the Old Law and of the laws concerning vows.

CHAPTER XLII

THE PRIESTS AND THE LEVITES

AFTER the departure of the Israelites from the land of Egypt, the tribe of Levi, for its fidelity and zeal on the occasion of the worship of the Golden Calf, was set apart and consecrated in a special manner for the service of the Tabernacle. Aaron and his sons were chosen by God to the Priesthood, and they alone could offer sacrifice, while the duty of the rest of the tribe, or of the *Levites*, was to serve the Tabernacle, and to assist the priests in their ministrations.

The *High Priest*, the first-born son of the family of Aaron, alone might enter the Holy of Holies, and he but once a year, on the great day of Atonement, when he sprinkled the blood of the sin-offering on the mercy seat, and burnt incense within the veil. His office was for life.

The *Priests*, the remaining sons of the family of Aaron, stood between the High Priest and the Levites. Their duties were to tend the sacred fire on the Altar of Burnt Offerings, to feed the Golden Lamp, to offer the morning and evening sacrifices every seventh day, to lay on the Table of Show-Bread the Loaves of Proposition, to sound the silver trumpets when the people were required to assemble, to examine and give judgment in cases of leprosy, and to teach the children of Israel the ordinances of the Lord.

The *Levites* included all the males of the tribe of Levi who were not of the family of Aaron, and were divided into *Caathites*, *Gersonites* and *Merarites*, from the three sons of Levi. They entered on their duties at the age of thirty; and these were to assist the priests and to see to the sacred furniture of the Tabernacle.

After Aaron, together with his sons, had been solemnly consecrated, he went with Moses into the Tabernacle of the Testimony, and afterwards came forth and blessed the people; "And behold a fire, coming forth from the Lord, devoured the holocaust, and the fat that was upon the altar." This miraculous fire sent from heaven was carefully preserved and nourished by the priests, and was from that time made use of for all the sacrifices (Lev. viii., ix.).

CHAPTER XLIII

LAW-BREAKERS SEVERELY PUNISHED

Now Nadab and Abiu, the eldest sons of Aaron, filled their censers with common fire, and having put incense upon it, were struck dead upon the spot for offering before the Lord strange fire which was not commanded them. " And fire coming out from the Lord destroyed them, and they died before the Lord " (Lev. x. 2).

Moses commanded the dead bodies, vested as they were in their linen tunics, to be carried from before the Sanctuary and to be cast forth from the camp. At the same time he forbade Aaron and his surviving sons, Eliezar and Ithamar, to show any signs of sorrow.

The punishment of Nadab and Abiu was quickly followed by another example of God's severity towards those who wilfully break His laws. While the Israelites were still encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai, a man, the son of an Egyptian father and a Hebrew mother, quarrelled with an Israelite, and in the heat of their wrangling blasphemed the name of God. The man was instantly seized and led before Moses, who ordered him to be fast bound till he himself had consulted the will of God in prayer.

The Lord spoke to Moses and said: " Bring forth the blasphemer without the camp, and let them that heard him put their hands upon his head, and let all the people stone him. The man that curseth his God shall bear his sin; and he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die. All the multitude shall stone him whether he be a native or a stranger " (Lev. xxiv. 14-16).

A similar punishment was inflicted on a man for gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. He was brought to Moses and Aaron, and cast into prison till it should be known what punishment they were to inflict on him. The Lord said to Moses: " Let that man die; let all the multitude stone him without the camp " (Num. xv. 35).

Among the many regulations given in Leviticus are those concerning leprosy. The man who was suspected of being a leper was commanded by the law of Moses to show himself to the priest, who, having examined him, caused him to be shut up for seven days, after which he was declared to be clean if there was no further development.

But of the man declared infected we read: " Whosoever shall be defiled with leprosy, and is separated by the judgment of the priest, shall have his clothes hanging loose, his head bare, and his mouth covered with a cloth; and he shall cry out that he is defiled and unclean. All the time that he is a leper and unclean, he shall dwell alone without the camp " (Lev. xiii. 44-46).

If the infected one recovered from his disease, he had again to show himself to the priest, and offer certain prescribed sacrifices as a thanksgiving. After the ceremony of purification, the priest pronounced him clean, and he was again restored to the society of his fellow-men (Lev. ix.-xiv.).

CHAPTER XLIV

THE FESTIVALS

God repeated to Moses His command regarding the *Sabbath*: "Six days shall you do work: the seventh day, because it is the rest of the Sabbath, shall be called holy. You shall do no work on that day" (Lev. xxiii. 3).

The great Festival of the *Pasch* or *Passover* was to be celebrated annually for all time in memory of the departure of the Israelites from the land of Egypt. The feast was to last seven days, on each of which special sacrifices were prescribed. But the first and the last of the seven days were to be observed with special solemnity. This feast is sometimes spoken of as the *Feast of Azymes*, or of unleavened bread.

Then came the great *Feast of Pentecost* (*fiftieth*), also called the *Feast of Harvest*, and again the *Feast of Weeks*. This was a feast not only in thanksgiving for the completed harvest, but in memory of the giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai, *fifty days* from the Passover.

The *Feast of Tabernacles* was the third of the great festivals. This was at once a festival of thanksgiving after the ingathering of the fruits, and a solemn commemoration of Israel's dwelling in tents during the time of their sojourn in the desert. "And you shall dwell in bowers seven days. Every one that is of the race of Israel shall dwell in tabernacles, that your posterity may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in tabernacles when I brought them out of the land of Egypt" (Lev. xxiii. 42, 43).

The *Feast of the New Moon*, although not observed as a Sabbath, was nevertheless signalised by the offering of additional sacrifices, and was announced to the people by the sounding of the silver trumpets.

The *Feast of Trumpets* was celebrated as a Sabbath on the first day of the seventh month, the Sabbatical month, and sanctified in a special manner the commencement of the civil year. The feast was ushered in by the blowing of trumpets.

The *Day of Atonement* took place on the tenth day of the seventh month. "It shall be most solemn, and shall be called holy; and you shall afflict your souls on that day, and shall offer a holocaust to the Lord. You shall do no servile work in the time of this day, because it is a day of propitiation, that the Lord your God may be merciful unto you" (Lev. xxiii. 27, 28). Entering the veil, the High Priest burnt incense before the Mercy Seat, which he sprinkled seven times with the blood of a calf slain. He then led before the door of the Tabernacle two he-goats presented by the people. On these he cast lots to determine which was to be offered in sacrifice, and which was to be the emissary goat. The latter he presented alive before the Lord, and when he had laid both his hands upon its head, and confessed over it the iniquities of the children of Israel, loaded as

it were with the sins of the people, it was turned into the desert, where it remained exposed to the mercy of the wild beasts.

The *Sabbatical Year* was every *seventh year*, and had to be regarded as a holy year. During this year the soil was to lie fallow, the vines were not to be pruned, nor were any of the fruits of the earth to be gathered in. That which grew without the aid of man belonged as common property to the whole community. This year was also called the *Year of Release*, because in it creditors were bound to release poor debtors from their obligations. The Hebrew slave, after serving six years, must, in the seventh year, be released from captivity.

The *Year of Jubilee* was celebrated every *fiftieth year*—that is, after the completion of seven times seven years. During the year of jubilee all debts were to be cancelled, the imprisoned were to be set free, and the slave was to receive his liberty (Lev. xxiii., xxv.).

The scape-goat was a figure of our Saviour, charged with all our sins in His Passion, and handed over to the brutal cruelty of His enemies.

CHAPTER XLV

THE SACRIFICES

SACRIFICES were offered to God as a perpetual commemoration of His covenant with His chosen people, in thanksgiving for His mercies and favours, and in atonement for sin. They were either *Bloody* or *Unbloody*.

The victims offered in *Bloody Sacrifices* were to be without blemish, and consisted of a bullock, a lamb or a kid, turtle-doves, or young pigeons. Such sacrifices might be *Holocausts* (whole burnt-offerings), *Peace-Offerings*, *Sin-Offerings*, or *Trespass-Offerings*.

Holocausts were offered as an act of adoration to God to acknowledge His supreme dominion over all creatures, and as a token of our dependence on the Lord of life and death.

Peace-Offerings were to thank God for favours received, and in supplication for further graces.

Sin-Offerings were in expiation for sins committed in ignorance, for unintentional sins, or as a purification from sin in general.

Trespass-Offerings were made for some particular sin committed knowingly, or through culpable ignorance. The offering might have to be accompanied with restitution.

Unbloody Sacrifices, or Oblations, in which no shedding of blood took place, were of two kinds: (1) the *fruits of the earth*, (2) *liquids*, such as oil and wine. These might be either mere oblations or real sacrifices. When offered in sacrifice they were either wholly or partially destroyed. In the case of liquids they were poured out as libations at the foot of the altar. The person offering the sacrifice had to furnish all things belonging to it (Lev. i.-vii.).

All the sacrifices of the Old Law were figurative of the One Sacrifice of the New Law. Their object was to stir up in the Israelites the consciousness of their sins, and faith and hope in the Redeemer to come. It was by their sorrow for sin, and belief and hope in the coming of the Messias, that they were justified, and not by the sanctifying power of the sacrifices themselves. "Remission of sin and sanctification were granted by virtue of the bloody sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, prefigured by the bloody sacrifices of the Jews, while their unbloody sacrifices were as many types of the unbloody sacrifice of the Eucharist."*

* Messmer's "Outlines of Bible Knowledge," p. 201.

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

The FOURTH *Book of Moses is called* NUMBERS *because it begins with an account of the* NUMBERING *of the people. It continues the history of the Israelites till their arrival on the borders of the Promised Land.*

CHAPTER XLVI

THE MARCH FROM SINAI, B.C. 1490

GOD said to Moses in the Tabernacle of the covenant: "Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel by their families and houses, and the names of every one of the male sex from twenty years old and upwards fit for war, and you shall number them by their troops. The number was found to be 603,550, excluding the Levites, who, on account of their duties in regard to the Tabernacle, were exempt from military service.

The people were next drawn up according to their tribes, each of which was commanded by a chosen prince and had its own standard around which to rally. The whole host, moreover, was drawn up in *four* large bodies under *Juda, Ruben, Ephraim,* and *Dan* respectively.

Now in the second month of the second year after the Exodus, the Cloud rose from the Tabernacle, and the people prepared to set forward by their troops from the desert of Sinai. As soon as the Ark, which was to be carried in front, was lifted up by its bearers, Moses cried out: "Arise, O Lord, and let Thy enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee from before Thy face." The Cloud remained over them by day to guide them as they marched; and when the Ark was set down, Moses exclaimed: "Return, O Lord, to the multitude of the host of Israel."

The Israelites had not gone far when, fatigued by the march, they began to murmur. To punish them, God sent fire among them, which destroyed many. Filled with fear, they cried to Moses to pray for them, and at his prayer the fire was swallowed up. Moses called the place Taberah (*burning*).

Soon they began to murmur again—this time against the manna so miraculously supplied for their daily wants; and once more they longed for the flesh-pots of Egypt. The mixed multitude of people, who were not of the race of Israel, but had come out of Egypt with them, asked: "Who shall give us flesh to eat?" They sat down and wept; and when the children of Israel saw them, they also joined in their expressions of discontent, saying: "Our soul is dry, our eyes behold nothing else but manna."

Moses heard their complaints as they stood at the entrance to their tents, and so overcome was he with grief on their account that he cried to the Lord: "Why hast thou afflicted Thy servant? Wherefore do I not find favour before Thee? And why hast Thou laid

the weight of all this people upon me? Whence should I have flesh to give to so great a multitude? I beseech Thee to kill me, and let me find grace in Thy eyes, that I be not afflicted with so great evils."

God said to Moses: "Gather unto Me seventy men of the ancients of Israel, whom thou knowest to be masters of the people. Thou shalt bring them to the door of the Tabernacle, and thou shalt make them stand there with thee, that I may come down and speak with thee. I will take of thy spirit, and will give to them, that they may bear with thee the burden of the people. And thou shalt say to the people: Be ye sanctified: to-morrow you shall eat flesh, not for one day, but even for a month of days." Moses said to Him: "There are six hundred thousand footmen of this people, and sayest Thou: I will give them flesh to eat a whole month?" The Lord answered him and said: "Is the hand of the Lord unable? Thou shalt presently see whether My word shall come to pass or no."

When Moses returned into the camp with the ancients of Israel on whom the Spirit had rested, God sent a strong wind which carried a countless number of quails from beyond the sea, and cast them into the camp, and on every side. Vast numbers were caught and killed by the people. What they could not eat they salted and dried in the sun, and thus they were enabled to lay by a large store for future use. Having for a whole year been accustomed to live upon manna, which was a light food, they were smitten, by reason of their gluttony, with a severe plague, and a great number died. The spot in which they were buried was named *The Graves of Lust* (Num. i.-xi.).

CHAPTER XLVII

MURMURING OF AARON AND MARY—THE TWELVE SPIES

While the Israelites were encamped at Haseroth, Aaron and Mary spoke against Moses because of his wife the Ethiopian, and said: "Hath the Lord spoken to Moses only? Hath He not also spoken to us in like manner?"

When the Lord heard this—for Moses was a man exceeding meek above all men that dwelt upon the earth—He immediately bade him and Aaron and Mary go to the Tabernacle of the Testimony. And as they went out, the Lord descended in the Pillar of Cloud, and standing in the entry of the Tabernacle, called to Aaron and Mary: "Hear My words: If there be among you a prophet of the Lord, I will speak to him in a vision or in a dream. But it is not so with My servant Moses, who is most faithful in all My house; for I speak to him mouth to mouth, and plainly, and not by riddles and figures doth he see the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak ill of My servant Moses?" Then, being angry with them, He went away, and the Cloud also that was over the Tabernacle departed; and behold Mary appeared white as snow with a leprosy.

When Aaron saw his sister thus disfigured, he humbled himself,

and entreated Moses, saying: " I beseech thee, my lord, lay not upon us this sin which we have foolishly committed; let her not be as one dead. Lo, now one half of her flesh is consumed with the leprosy."

Moved with pity, Moses cried to the Lord: " O God, I beseech Thee, heal her." The Lord answered him: " Let her be separated seven days without the camp, and afterwards she shall be called again." Mary was accordingly put out of the camp seven days, and the people moved not from that place till she was recalled.

After the days of Mary's penance were completed, and the judgment sent upon her had been removed, the Israelites next pitched their tents in the desert of Pharan, at Cades, on the very borders of the Land of Promise. Here God commanded Moses to choose twelve men, one from each tribe, to go as spies to inspect the land of Chanaan, which He had promised to give the children of Israel for a possession.

Moses then selected twelve of the rulers of the people, and said to them: " Go you up by the south side; and when you shall come to the mountains, view the land, of what sort it is, and the people that are the inhabitants thereof; whether the land be good or bad, woody or without trees; what manner of cities, walled or without walls. Be of good courage, and bring us of the fruits of the land."

The spies set out from Cades and viewed the land as far as Rohob, situated at the foot of Mount Libanus and on the road to Emath. They reached Rohob by the banks of the Jordan, and returned by the borders of the Sidonians and the Philistines, through Hebron to the camp at Cades, after an absence of forty days. From a valley near Hebron they gathered pomegranates and figs, and a cluster of grapes so large that it had to be borne on a staff by two men. They named the place *Nehelescol*—that is, *the Torrent of the Cluster of Grapes*.

On their return they showed Moses and Aaron and all the people the fruits which they had brought back with them. " The land," they said, " in very deed floweth with milk and honey, as may be known by these fruits; but it hath very strong inhabitants, and the cities are great and walled."

Hereupon a murmur arose against Moses; but Caleb said: " Let us go up and possess the land, for we shall be able to conquer it." The other spies, however, with the exception of Josue, exclaimed: " No, we are not able to go up to this people, because they are stronger than we. The land which we have viewed devoureth its inhabitants, and the people that we beheld are of tall stature. There are certain monsters of the sons of Enac, of the giant kind, in comparison with whom we seemed like locusts."

The whole multitude wept and, murmuring, said: " Would to God we had died in Egypt, and that we may die in this vast wilderness, that the Lord may not bring us into this land lest we fall by the sword. Is it not better to return into Egypt? Let us appoint a captain, and let us return thither."

Moses and Aaron fell down flat upon the ground before the multi-

tude; but Josue and Caleb rent their garments and said to the people: "The land which we have gone round is very good. If the Lord be favourable, He will bring us into it, and give us a land flowing with milk and honey. Be not rebellious against the Lord, and fear not the people of the land, for we are able to destroy them. All aid is gone from them: the Lord is with us, fear ye not."

But the people cried out the more, and would have stoned them, had not the glory of the Lord suddenly appeared over the Tabernacle. Then did God pronounce a terrible judgment. Calling Moses to Him He said: "How long will this people detract Me? How long will they not believe Me for all the signs that I have wrought before them? I will strike them with pestilence, therefore, and will consume them; but thee I will make a ruler over a great nation, and a mightier than this is."

But Moses implored the Lord, saying: "Forgive them, I beseech Thee, according to the greatness of Thy mercy." God answered him: "I have forgiven them according to thy word, as I live; yet all the men that have seen My majesty, and the signs that I have done in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have tempted Me now ten times, and have not obeyed My voice, shall not see the land for which I swore to their fathers, neither shall any of them that have detracted Me behold it. Of all those who have attained the twentieth year, and have murmured against Me, not one shall enter into the land except Josue and Caleb; but their children will I bring in that they may see the land which they have despised. Their children shall wander in the desert forty years: according to the number of the forty days wherein they viewed the land, a year shall be counted a day."

He then struck dead the ten faithless spies who had made the whole multitude to murmur against Him. The people mourned and lamented, but it was too late; Moses had already been commanded by God to remove the camp and to return into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea.

But the people were now resolved to seize the land even against the will of God and in spite of the warnings of Moses. They went to the top of the mountain, fully determined to advance; but the Ark departed not from the camp, nor did Moses accompany them. They were set upon by the Amalecites and the Chanaanites, who defeated them, and pursued them with great slaughter as far as Horma (Num. xii.-xiv.).

CHAPTER XLVIII

REBELLION OF CORE, DATHAN, AND ABIRON

In the case of Aaron and Mary we have a murmuring against authority; the crime of Core, Dathan, and Abiron was one of rebellion against the spiritual and temporal authority established by God among His people, the crime, too, of pretending to the Priesthood by such as had not been duly called and sent.

Core, of the tribe of Levi, and Dathan and Abiron, of the tribe of

Ruben, together with two hundred and fifty chiefs of the Israelites, while they were still encamped at Cades, rose up against Moses and Aaron and claimed equality with Moses and the priests, not only for themselves, but for the whole congregation of Israel. "Let it be enough for you," they said, "that all the multitude consisteth of holy ones: why lift you up yourselves above the people of the Lord?"

Moses prostrated himself on the ground and prayed to God. He then rose up and thus addressed Core and all the multitude: "In the morning the Lord will make known who belong to Him, and the holy He will join to Himself, and those whom He shall choose shall approach Him. Take every man of you your censers, and putting fire in them to-morrow, put incense upon it before the Lord. You take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi. Is it a small thing that the God of Israel hath separated you from the people, and joined you to Himself, that you should serve Him in the service of the Tabernacle, and should minister to Him? Did He therefore make you to approach unto Him that you should challenge to yourselves the Priesthood also?"

He next sent for Dathan and Abiron, but they refused to come. Then turning to Core, he said: "Do thou and thy congregation stand apart before the Lord to-morrow, and Aaron apart, each holding his censer." No sooner had they done so, than fire came out from the Lord and destroyed Core and the two hundred and fifty that offered incense with him; but Aaron was untouched by the fire.

The glory of the Lord appeared to all, and Moses was commanded to separate the whole people from the tents of Core, Dathan, and Abiron. As Dathan and Abiron stood in the entry of their pavilions with their wives and children, Moses turned to the people and said: "By this shall you know that the Lord hath sent me to do all things that you see. If these men die the common death of men, and if they be visited with a plague wherewith others also are wont to be visited, the Lord did not send me; but if the Lord do a new thing, and the earth, opening its mouth, swallow them down, and all the things that belong to them, and they go down alive into hell, you shall know that they have blasphemed the Lord."

Immediately the earth broke asunder under the feet of those guilty men, and engulfed them, together with their tents and all their substance. The ground closed over them, and thus they perished from among the people. Their cries struck terror into those who were standing around, and caused them in alarm to hurry from the spot for fear they also might perish. God then commanded Moses to have the censers of those who had perished beaten into plates and fastened to the altar, as a sign and a memorial that no one who was not of the family of Aaron should come near to offer incense to the Lord.

The people now began to murmur against Moses and Aaron because of the fate of so many of their companions. "You have killed the people of the Lord," they said.

Moses and Aaron fled to the Tabernacle; and no sooner had they

gone in than the Cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared. God said to Moses: " Get you out from the midst of this multitude: this moment will I destroy them."

Ever eager to save his people, Moses said to Aaron: " Take the censer, and putting fire in it from the altar, put incense upon it, and go quickly to the people to pray for them; for already wrath is gone out from the Lord, and the plague rageth."

Aaron ran into the midst of the people whom the burning fire was now consuming. He offered incense, and standing between the living and the dead, prayed for the people, and the scourge ceased. The number of those who perished was 14,700, besides those who had been destroyed in the sedition of Core.

To give yet another proof that Aaron and his sons had been chosen for the Priesthood, God commanded Moses to take twelve rods, in addition to that of Aaron, a rod for each tribe, and to write on each the name of the tribe to which it belonged. The rod representing the tribe of Levi bore the name of Aaron. These were then laid up in the Tabernacle, with the promise of God that the rod of the one whom He had chosen for the Priesthood should blossom.

On the following morning Moses returned to the Tabernacle and found that Aaron's rod, which had been cut out of almond wood, was covered not only with buds and blossoms, but with leaves and full-grown almonds. The rest of the rods were dry and unchanged as at first. God said to Moses: " Carry back the rod of Aaron to the Tabernacle, that it may be kept there for a token of the rebellious children of Israel " (Num. xvi., xvii.).

CHAPTER XLIX

SIN OF MOSES AND AARON—DEATH OF AARON

As God had commanded, the Israelites again turned back into the wilderness of Pharan by the way of the Red Sea, and began those long years of penance which their murmurings and want of confidence in the Divine protection had brought upon them.

When the time of their punishment was drawing to a close, Moses once more led the people to the borders of the Promised Land; and again they assembled at Cades. Here it was that Mary, the sister of Moses and Aaron, died and was buried at the age of 130 years. She had murmured against Moses, and was not permitted to enter the Promised Land.

Water having again failed, the people came together against Moses and Aaron, exclaiming: " Would to God we had perished among our brethren before the Lord. Why have you brought us into the wilderness that both we and our cattle should die, there being no water to drink ? "

Moses withdrew to the Tabernacle and prayed: " O Lord God, hear the cry of this people, and open to them Thy treasure, a fountain of living water, that, being satisfied, they may cease to murmur." The Lord answered him: " Take the rod, and assemble the people

together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and *speak to the rock* before them, and it shall yield waters."

Moses gathered together the multitude before the rock and said to them: "Hear, ye rebellious and incredulous: can *we* bring forth water out of this rock?"—and he *struck the rock twice* with the rod. The water gushed forth in great abundance, and the people and their cattle drank.

But God was displeased with Moses and Aaron for their want of confidence and weakness of faith, and said to them: "Because you have not believed Me, and honoured Me before the children of Israel, you shall not bring these people into the land which I will give them." In memory of the murmuring of the people, God Himself named the place Meribah (*The Water of Contradiction*).

In the meantime, Moses sent messengers from Cades to the King of Edom to say that the Israelites were the brethren of the Edomites, and to request permission to pass through his country. A promise, moreover, was given to the king that the Israelites would not go through the fields, nor the vineyards, and that they would not drink the waters of the wells, but would go by the common highway, turning aside neither to the right nor to the left until they were past his borders. The king replied: "Thou shalt not pass by me. If thou dost, I will come out armed against thee." And immediately he came forth to oppose them with a strong band.

Once more the Israelites had to retrace their steps southward as far as the eastern arm of the Red Sea, and then turned north, keeping the land of Edom on the left.

When they reached Mount Hor, God appeared to Moses and said: "Aaron shall not go into the land which I have given the children of Israel, because he was incredulous to My words at the Waters of Contradiction. Take him, therefore, and his son with him, and bring him up into Mount Hor. And when thou hast stripped the father of his robes, thou shalt vest therewith Eleazar, his son. Aaron shall be gathered to his people and die there."

They went into the mountain before all the multitude; and when Moses had stripped Aaron of his priestly robes, and had vested Eleazar with them, there, within sight of the Promised Land, the High Priest died in the 123rd year of his age. The people mourned for him thirty days. Besides Eleazar, he left another son, Ithamar (Num. xx.).

CHAPTER L

THE FIERY SERPENTS

After the days of mourning for Aaron were passed, the Israelites continued their march, and were attacked by King Arad, the Chanaanite, who succeeded in carrying off much spoil. Eventually, however, they defeated Arad, destroyed the cities of the Chanaanites, and called the place Horma (*destruction*) in memory of their success. They next marched by the way leading to the Red Sea.

Discouraged, and weary of their journey, they again began to utter complaints against Moses. "There is no bread," they exclaimed; "nor have we any waters: our soul now loatheth this very light food."

To punish their murmuring, God sent amongst them fiery serpents, whose bite caused a violent heat, and was so terrible that many of them perished. Filled with terror, the survivors fled to Moses and said: "We have sinned, because we have spoken against the Lord and thee. Pray that He may take away these serpents from us." God was moved to pity by his prayer for mercy, and said to him: "Make a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign. Whosoever being struck shall look on it shall live." Moses carried out the command of God; and when they that were bitten looked upon the Brazen Serpent they were healed.

After journeying as far south as the Red Sea, the march of the Israelites turned in a northerly direction till they came to the torrent of Zared, which flows into the Dead Sea at the south-east. Crossing the Zared they next encamped on the south bank of the Arnon, a river separating the Moabites from the Amorrhites.

It was while they were encamped here that the Israelites sent to ask leave of Sehon, King of the Amorrhites, to pass peaceably through his dominions. Not only did he refuse their request, but at the head of an army marched forth to prevent their passage. The Israelites, however, forcibly crossed the river, and attacked and routed the Amorrhites with great slaughter, their king being among the slain.

Their next opposition was from Og, the giant King of Basan, who also was an Amorrhite, and ruled the country farther north. God appeared to Moses and said: "Fear him not, for I have delivered him and all his people and his country into thy hand. And thou shalt do to him as thou didst to Sehon." Og was slain and his lands were seized; and by this victory the Israelites now held the country east of the Jordan (Num. xxi.).

The Brazen Serpent lifted up in the desert was a figure of Christ's Crucifixion on Calvary. As the Israelites bitten by the fiery serpents were healed of their wounds by looking upon the Brazen Serpent, so, too, the whole human race, guilty in the person of Adam, can be healed of the wounds inflicted by the hellish serpent by looking up with a lively faith, and with love and confidence, on Jesus Christ crucified. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (John iii. 14, 15).

CHAPTER LI

THE PROPHET BALAAM

Moses next led his people to the Jordan, and encamped in the great plain over against Jericho. Balac, King of the Moabites, fearing the same fate as had overtaken his neighbours, sent messengers to Balaam

a famous prophet who dwelt in Mesopotamia, by the banks of the river Euphrates, and offered him great rewards if he would come and call down curses on the Israelites. The messengers carried with them rich presents, by means of which the king hoped to win the prophet's favour.

Balaam received the messengers and promised them that, the next morning, he would answer whatsoever the Lord should say to him. During the night God made known His will to Balaam: "What mean these men that are with thee? Thou shalt not go with them, nor shalt thou curse the people, because it is blessed." Morning being come, Balaam bade the strangers return alone into their own country, as the Lord had expressly forbidden him to accompany them.

Balac was not discouraged, but again despatched messengers more numerous and more noble than he had sent before. But Balaam answered them: "If Balac would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot alter the word of the Lord my God to speak either more or less." That night God appeared to him again and said: "If these men be come to call thee, arise and go with them; yet so that thou do what I shall command thee." In the morning Balaam saddled his ass, and, accompanied by two servants, went with them.

As they went on their journey, an angel of the Lord stood in the way with a drawn sword in his hand, unperceived by Balaam, but the ass, startled at the sight, turned aside out of the way and ran into a field to avoid him. Balaam beat her, and tried to bring her back again into the road, which, a little further on, was bounded by a wall on either side. In the narrow passage between the two walls stood the angel, and the ass refused to advance. In her efforts to avoid the angel, she crushed Balaam's foot against the wall, and received cruel blows for her supposed stubbornness. At last, in her struggle to escape, she fell under her master, who now beat her more unmercifully than ever.

Then, to convince Balaam of his cruelty and folly, God opened the mouth of the ass, and she said: "What have I done to thee? Why strikest thou me, lo, now this third time?" Balaam answered: "Because thou hast deserved it, and hast served me ill. I would I had a sword that I might kill thee." The ass replied: "Am I not thy beast on which thou hast always been accustomed to ride until the present day? Tell me if I ever did the like thing to thee."

Then were Balaam's eyes opened, and he saw the angel standing in the way with a drawn sword, ready to kill him. At once he fell down on the ground before the angel, who said to him: "Why beatest thou thy ass these three times? I am come to withstand thee because thy way is perverse and contrary to me. Unless the ass had turned out of the way, I had slain thee, and she should have lived." Balaam replied: "I have sinned, not knowing that thou didst stand against me. And now if it displease thee that I go, I will return." The angel said to him: "Go with these men, and see thou speak no other thing than what I shall command thee."

Hearing that Balaam was approaching, the king went out to meet him, and led him to a high place on which was a temple dedicated to the false god Baal, and from which the whole camp of Israel could be distinctly viewed. Here Balaam caused seven altars to be raised, and gave orders that as many calves and the same number of rams should be prepared for sacrifice. He then retired to consult the Divine will.

On his return he found Balac, with all the princes of Moab, standing by his burnt-offering, and said to him: "Balac, King of the Moabites, hath brought me from Aram, from the mountains of the east: Come, said he, and curse Jacob: make haste and detest Israel. How shall I curse him whom God hath not cursed? By what means should I detest him whom the Lord detesteth not? Who can count the dust of Jacob and know the number of the stock of Israel? Let my soul die the death of the just, and my last end be like to them." Balac reproved him for uttering a blessing instead of a curse; but Balaam answered: "Can I speak anything else but what the Lord commandeth?"

Three times were sacrifices offered, and three times did Balaam utter blessings on the people of God. The Spirit of God coming upon him, he exclaimed: "How beautiful are thy tabernacles, O Jacob, and thy tents, O Israel! As woody valleys, as watered gardens near the rivers, as tabernacles which the Lord hath pitched, as cedars by the waterside. He that blesseth thee shall also himself be blessed: he that curseth thee shall be reckoned accursed."

Filled with anger, Balac bade him depart from the territory of Moab, and told him how much he would have honoured him had not the Lord deprived him of the reward intended for him. But Balaam at once broke out into that beautiful prophecy concerning the Messias: "*A Star shall rise out of Jacob*, and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel. Out of Jacob shall He come that shall rule" (Num. xxiv. 17, 19).

Balaam still lingered among the Madianites, the neighbours of the Moabites, and advised them to join with the children of Moab in an earnest endeavour to corrupt the Israelites, and thus bring down upon them the anger of God. The festival of Beelphegor, an obscene idol of the Moabites, was at hand; and at the request of the Madianite women, great numbers of the Israelites joined in the sacrifices to the false god, and defiled both soul and body by their excesses.

Moses was filled with grief and sorrow; and, at the command of God, ordered the guilty ones to be slain. As many as four-and-twenty thousand perished. Phinees, the son of Eleazar the High Priest, seeing an Israelite lead into the camp a Madianite woman, in the sight of Moses and the other faithful Israelites who were praying at the door of the Tabernacle, slew them both with a dagger. God bade Moses say to Phinees: "Behold I give him the peace of My covenant, and the covenant of the Priesthood for ever shall be to him and his seed, because he has been zealous for his God, and

hath made atonement for the wickedness of the children of Israel."

A terrible vengeance was yet in store for the Madianites for having led God's people into sin; but before war was made upon them, Moses and the High Priest Eleazar were ordered to take a second census of the children of Israel.

Excluding the tribe of Levi, they found that the number of those who were able to bear arms amounted to 601,730. To the tribe of Levi, which had been set apart for the Priesthood and for the ministry of the Tabernacle, no allotment was to be made when the Israelites entered the Promised Land; but they were to live dispersed among the other tribes, and for their support were to receive tithes of all the land and cattle. Of the forty-eight cities allotted to them, six were to be *Cities of Refuge*. The Altar of Holocausts, and later on the Temple, enjoyed the same privilege.

The Lord again appeared to Moses and said: "Revenge first the children of Israel on the Madianites, and so thou shalt be gathered to thy people."

With a body of 12,000 men the Israelites marched against the enemy and routed them with great slaughter. Balaam himself, who was still sojourning amongst them, was put to the sword. Their possessions were plundered, their women and children taken captive, and their cities, villages, and strongholds burnt to the ground. Even the women who had a share in leading the Israelites astray were, by the command of Moses, slain without mercy (Num. xxii.-xxxv.).

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

This Book is called Deuteronomy (Greek, DEUTEROS, *second, and* NOMOS, *law) because it repeats the ordinances given on Mount Sinai, besides adding other precepts not given before. It is the last of the Pentateuch, or of the* FIVE BOOKS *written by Moses.*

CHAPTER LII

THE DEATH OF MOSES, B.C. 1451

WHEN Moses had at length brought the children of Israel in sight of the Jordan, which he knew he was not to cross, God appeared to him and said: "Go up into this mountain, Abarim, and thence view the land which I will give to the children of Israel. And when thou shalt have seen it, thou shalt go to thy people, as thy brother Aaron is gone . . . Take Josue, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and put thy hand upon him. He shall stand before Eleazar the priest and all the multitude, and thou shalt give him precepts in the sight of all, and part of thy glory, that all the congregation of Israel may hear him. If anything be to be done, Eleazar the priest shall consult the Lord for him. He, and all the children of Israel with him, and the rest of the multitude, shall go in and go out at his word." Then Moses, laying his hand on Josue's head, repeated all that the Lord had commanded.

Shortly before his death Moses assembled the people, and rehearsed all that had passed from the time of their leaving Egypt. He reminded them of their conduct during that period, of their frequent murmurings, and of God's dealings with them. "This day," he said, "I am a hundred and twenty years old. I can no longer go out and come in, especially as the Lord hath said to me: Thou shalt not pass over this Jordan. Josue shall go over before you as the Lord hath spoken. Do manfully, and be of good heart. Fear not, and be not dismayed; for the Lord your God is your leader, and will not leave you, nor forsake you." To Josue he said: "Take courage and be valiant, for thou shalt bring this people into the land which the Lord swore He would give to their fathers, and thou shalt divide it by lot. The Lord be with thee."

Moses next spoke, in the hearing of all the people, the words of a canticle, which they were commanded to learn for the remembrance of the Law. This canticle recalls all the benefits God has bestowed upon them, the chastisements with which He threatens them if they should abandon Him, and His mercy should they turn to Him and repent.

Having solemnly blessed the twelve tribes, the holy servant of God went up from the plains of Moab to the top of Phasga, the highest point of Nebo, which itself was a summit of the Abarim mountains;

and here he died by the commandment of the Lord, who buried him in the land of Moab, over against Phogor, and no man knows the place of his sepulchre.

The people of Israel mourned for him thirty days in the plains of Moab, and faithfully obeyed Josue, who was filled with the Spirit of Wisdom. There no more arose a prophet in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face (Deut. xxxi.-xxxiv.).

Moses was a figure of Jesus Christ: " I will raise them up a PROPHET out of the midst of their brethren, *like to thee ;* and I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak all that I shall command Him " (Deut. xviii. 18).

And how striking this resemblance was to be ! At the time of the birth of Moses a cruel king was putting to death all the male children of the Hebrews; when our Saviour was born, King Herod gave orders that all the male children in and around Bethlehem should be put to death. Moses escaped the fury of Pharao, as did our Saviour the fury of Herod.

Moses, the ambassador of God, was sent to deliver the chosen people from the bondage of Egypt; our Saviour was sent by His Heavenly Father to deliver mankind from the slavery of sin. To confirm his mission Moses worked many miracles; our Lord, by His works and miracles, proved that He was the Son of God.

Moses fed his people with manna from heaven; our Saviour, in the Holy Eucharist, is the life and food of our soul.

Moses made known the law of God to the people and confirmed it with the blood of victims; Christ established the New Law of the Gospel and confirmed it with His own Blood.

THE BOOK OF JOSUE

This Book contains the history of what passed under Josue, and is commonly supposed to have been written by him.

PART IV

FROM THE DEATH OF MOSES TO SAUL, THE FIRST KING OF ISRAEL

B.C. 1451 TO B.C. 1095

CHAPTER LIII

THE TWO SPIES—PASSAGE OF THE JORDAN

AFTER the death of Moses, God said to Josue, the servant of Moses: "Arise and pass over this Jordan. I will deliver to you every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon. As I have been with Moses, so will I be with thee; I will not leave thee nor forsake thee. Take courage and be strong. Turn not from the law to the right hand nor to the left, that thou mayest understand all things which thou dost."

Josue began at once to prepare to cross the Jordan. Three days were spent in making the necessary arrangements; and at length all was ready for the advance.

In the meantime Josue had sent two men to spy out the land, and in particular the city of Jericho. Entering this city, they went into a house situated on the city wall, belonging to a woman named Rahab, and here they arranged to remain for the night.

Now it chanced to reach the ears of the king of Jericho that two strangers, who had come into the city as spies, were at the house of Rahab, and he gave orders to have them seized and brought to him.

As soon as Rahab learnt that the king's messengers were on the way to her house, she hid the spies under the stalks of flax which chanced to be spread out to dry on the flat roof of her house; but hardly had she concealed the two men when the king's messengers came up and demanded their surrender.

"I confess they came to me," said Rahab, "but I knew not whence they were. At the time of shutting the gate in the dark, they also went out together. I know not whither they are gone. Pursue after them quickly, and you will overtake them." As the road leading to the Jordan was the most likely one by which the spies would try to escape, the officers, without further delay, set out in all haste; and as soon as they were gone, the city gates were shut.

Rahab then went up to the spies and said: "I know that the Lord hath given the land to you, for the dread of you is fallen upon us, and the inhabitants have lost all their strength. We have heard

that the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea at your going in, when you came out of Egypt, and what things you did to the two kings of the Amorrhites. Now, therefore, swear to me by the Lord that, as I have shown mercy to you, so you will show mercy to my father's house, and give me a true token that you will save my father and mother, my brethren and sisters, and all things that are theirs." They answered her: " Be our lives for you unto death, only if thou betray us not. And when the Lord shall have delivered to us the land, we will show thee mercy and truth."

Rahab then let them down with a rope from the window, bidding them go to the mountains, and there lie hid for a time, lest they should meet the officers who had gone in pursuit of them. Before leaving her, they bade her fasten to her window a scarlet cord, so that the Israelites, to whom they would make known their promise, might, when the city fell, recognise her house and spare all therein. The spies made good their escape, and, after hiding in the mountains, returned to Josue, and told him all that had happened to them, and of their promise to Rahab.

Early in the morning Josue broke up the camp at Setim and advanced to the edge of the Jordan, which at this time was much swollen in consequence of the melting snow upon the mountains. Heralds were sent through the camp to proclaim: " When you shall see the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests carrying it, rise you up also, and follow them as they go before; and let there be the space of two thousand cubits between you and the Ark, that you may see it afar off, and know which way you must go. Take care you come not near the Ark."

At a given signal the priests took up the Ark and advanced to the Jordan; and no sooner did their feet touch the rushing waters than the river was divided. The waters that came down from above stood in one place, and swelling up like a mountain, were seen afar off; while those on the left flowed on towards the Dead Sea, thus leaving a dry passage across the bed of the river. Into the midst of this channel the priests advanced bearing the Ark, and there they remained till all the multitude of Israel had passed dry-shod to the other side.

God now said to Josue: " Choose twelve men, one of every tribe, and command them to take out of the midst of the Jordan twelve very hard stones, which you shall set up in the place of the camp where you shall pitch your tents this night." Josue directed his twelve chosen men to fetch each a large stone on his shoulders, and to set it up as a memorial of so miraculous an event. He next placed twelve other stones in the middle of the channel of the Jordan, where the priests had stood who carried the Ark; then he commanded the priests to go forward with the Ark. As soon as they reached the bank, the waters returned into their channel and flowed on as before.

The twelve stones taken out of the channel of the Jordan were set up at Galgal, where the Israelites made the first encampment after crossing the river.

THE HOLY LAND
as allotted by Josue
to
THE TWELVE TRIBES
of
ISRAEL
Scale English Miles
35
36
33
33
PHOENICIA
ARAM OR SYRIA
DAN
NAPHTALI
GALILEE
ZABULON
ISSACHAR
MANASSES
Half Tribe
BASAN
HAURAN
MANASSES
GREAT SEA
Sidon
Tyre
Ptolemais
Damascus
Mt Hermon
Mt Lebanon
Anti Lebanon
Mt Sirion
Baal Gad
Cedes
Waters of Merom
Astaroth Karnaim
Edrai
Gaulon
Sea of Cenereth
Aphec
Astaroth
Cabul
Messal
Dabareth
Mt Thabor
Jezrael
Bethsan
Mahanaim
Bosrah of Moab
Thenac
Mt Gelboe
Dothan
Jabes Galaad
Ceba
Thersa
Samaria
Mt Ebal
Taphua
Sychar
Sycmar
Phinathon
Aenzibo
Abdon
Ajalon
Magedde
Thenac
Der
Messal
Mt Hermon
Lebanon
Anti Lebanon
Mt Sirion
Damascus
Sidon
Tyre
Ptolemais
Cana
Rehoh
Baal Gad
Dan
Naphtali
Cedes
Asor
Hasor
Waters of Merom
Astaroth Karnaim
Basan
Edrai
Hauran
Aenzibo
Abdon
Ajalon
Galilee
Cabul
Gaulon
Sea of Cenereth
Aphec
Manasses
Half Tribe
Elmelech
Zabulon
Dabareth
Mt Thabor
Issachar
Jezrael
Bethsan
Mahanaim
Bosrah of Moab
Great Sea
Thenac
Mt Gelboe
Dothan
Jabes Galaad
Manasses
Ceba
Thersa
Samaria
Mt Ebal
Taphua
Sychar
Sycmar
Phinathon

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In the passage of the Jordan we find the Ark marking the way for the people in place of the Cloud, which had disappeared on the death of Moses.

While the Israelites were encamped at Galgal, Josue had the ceremony of circumcision performed, which had been omitted during the forty years' sojourn in the wilderness. It was there also that, for the first time since their leaving Mount Sinai, they celebrated the Feast of the Passover. On the next day the people ate unleavened bread made of the corn of the land; and from that time the manna ceased (Jos. i.-v.).

CHAPTER LIV

FALL OF JERICHO AND OF HAI

WHEN it was noised among the Chanaanites that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan before the children of Israel till they had passed over, their courage failed them.

While Josue was revolving in his mind how he should attack Jericho, there suddenly appeared before him an angel in the semblance of a man with a drawn sword in his hand, who said to him: "I am prince of the host of the Lord, and now I am come: loose thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy. . . . Behold I have given into thy hands Jericho, and the king thereof, and all the valiant men. Go round about the city all ye fighting men once a day: so shall ye do for six days. And on the seventh day the priests shall take the seven trumpets which are used in the jubilee, and shall go before the Ark; and you shall go about the city seven times, and the priests shall sound the trumpets. And when the voice of the trumpet shall give a longer and broken tune, all the people shall shout together with a very great shout, and the walls of the city shall fall to the ground, and they shall enter in every one at the place against which they shall stand."

This command Josue carefully carried out. Once a day for six days they marched round about the city; but on the seventh day they went round it seven times, and at the last round Josue gave the command: "Shout; for the Lord hath delivered the city to you." The trumpets pealed forth one long-continued blast, the whole people sent forth a mighty shout, and the walls of Jericho fell flat to the ground. The Israelites poured into the doomed city, and at the command of Josue slew all the inhabitants except Rahab and those that were with her, because she had shown mercy to the two spies. The city itself they set on fire and burnt everything in it except the gold and silver, as well as the vessels of brass and iron, which Josue consecrated to the treasury of the Lord. He strictly forbade the people to keep any of these things for their own use.

From Jericho Josue sent spies to Hai, a city to the east of Bethel. On their return they reported that the place was weakly defended, and that two or three thousand men would be able with ease to destroy it. Josue sent a body of three thousand to take it; but no sooner

had they come in sight than the enemy, marching forth, fell upon them and drove them, broken and defeated, from the gate. Thirty-six were left dead on the field.

This disaster filled the whole camp with dismay. Josue and the elders prostrated themselves before the Ark until the evening, and, with every mark of grief and sorrow, prayed to God, and besought Him to declare to them the reason of the disgrace which had thus befallen His people.

The Lord said to Josue: "Arise, why liest thou flat on the ground? Israel hath sinned, and transgressed My covenant. They have stolen of the booty, and have hidden it among their goods. I will be no more with you till you destroy him that is guilty of this wickedness."

The next morning Josue assembled the people by their tribes, and when he had cast lots to discover the guilty one, the lot fell upon Juda, and finally Achan, the son of Charmi, was discovered to be the offender. Achan said to Josue: "Indeed I have sinned against the Lord; for I saw among the spoils a scarlet garment, exceeding good, and two hundred sicles of silver, and a golden rule of fifty sicles. I took them away and hid them in the ground in the midst of my tent, and the silver I covered with the earth that I dug up."

Messengers were sent to search the tent of Achan, and the spoils were found in the very spot he had indicated. Achan was seized, together with all that he possessed. They led him into the valley of Achor, and there he was stoned to death, and all things that were his were consumed by fire.

God then said to Josue: "Fear not, nor be thou dismayed: take with thee all the multitude of fighting men, and go up to Hai: behold I have delivered into thy hand the king thereof, and the people, and the city, and the land. Thou shalt do to the city of Hai as thou hast done to Jericho, but the spoils and the cattle you shall take as a prey to yourselves."

On coming near to Hai, Josue left 5,000 men in ambush on the west side of the city, while he and the rest of the army approached it from the north.

When the people of Hai saw them advancing, they hastened out to meet them, led by their king, and ignorant of the 5,000 ready to fall upon their rear. Confident by reason of their previous success, they went forth as to certain victory, while the Israelites, dissembling fear, turned their backs and fled. By this means the Israelites succeeded in drawing the enemy away from the city, and then wheeled about and faced them.

Josue now gave the signal agreed upon between himself and those who were in ambush, by pointing his shield towards Hai. Unperceived by the enemy, the 5,000 entered the city and began to set fire to it, and only when it was too late did the enemy perceive the stratagem which had so well succeeded against them. Attacked in front and rear, they fell an easy prey to the Israelites, who slew them to a man, except their king, whom they took prisoner. The

city was plundered and burnt to the ground, the spoil was divided amongst the conquerors, and the king, after being hanged on a gibbet, was buried at the entrance to the city (Jos. v.-viii.).

CHAPTER LV

THE CONQUEST OF CHANAAN

HAVING proceeded thus far in the conquest of Chanaan, Josue thought the time had come for a solemn ratification of the Law. Half of the tribes were assembled on Mount Hebal and the rest on Mount Garizim, while in the valley between these two mountains was the Ark, attended by priests and Levites. On Hebal Josue built an altar and offered upon it burnt-offerings to the Lord and sacrificed peace-offerings. He next wrote the Law upon stones, and these he set up as a memorial. He then directed the Levites to read aloud the blessings and cursings of the Law as they appear set forth in Deuteronomy; and to each separate curse and blessing repeated by the Levites the whole multitude responded with a loud and earnest *Amen*. The Israelites then returned to Galgal.

The tidings of Josue's victory over Jericho and Hai soon spread to the neighbouring peoples, and they, too, began to be alarmed for their own safety. For mutual protection they united their forces with the intention of falling in overwhelming numbers upon Israel, whom they regarded as their common enemy. The city of Gabaon, however, refused to join the league, and sought a strange device for securing a separate peace.

The Gabaonites sent ambassadors to Josue, who represented to him that they had come from a far-distant country to arrange a treaty of peace and friendship with him. They cunningly arrayed themselves in old and tattered garments; their shoes were patched and worn; the bread they carried with them was dry, stale, and mouldy, although they asserted that when they left home it was fresh-baked; their wine-skins were torn and patched: all this to show the marks of a long and toilsome journey.

Convinced of the truth of their story, Josue, without first consulting God, entered into a solemn league of friendship with them, and both he and the elders bound themselves by oath not to destroy them. The messengers then returned home.

Three days afterwards the Israelites found themselves in the territories of these same people, who, they had been given to believe, dwelt in a far-off country. They murmured against their princes and called for the death of the impostors; but Josue answered: "We have sworn to them in the name of the Lord, the God of Israel, and therefore we may not touch them, lest we should be forsworn; but so let them live as to serve the whole multitude in hewing wood and bringing in water." The lives of the Gabaonites were spared, but their lands were taken from them; and from that day forward they became hewers of wood and drawers of water in the service of the Altar of the Lord, and of all the people.

When the other kings learnt that the Gabaonites had made an alliance with Josue they were filled with rage, and five of them joined their forces to lay siege to Gabaon. The Gabaonites, however, sent an urgent message to Josue, entreating him to come with all speed and save them from the threatened destruction.

Marching from Galgal by night, Josue came suddenly upon the combined forces as they lay encamped before the city, and defeated them with great slaughter. Great numbers sought safety in flight, " but when they were fleeing from the children of Israel, and were in the descent of Bethoron, the Lord cast down upon them great stones from heaven, as far as Azeca; and many more were killed with the hailstones than were slain by the swords of the children of Israel."

Then it was that Josue, fearing that night might put an end to the battle before the victory was complete, called upon the Lord, and exclaimed in the hearing of his army: " Move not, O sun, towards Gabaon, nor thou, O moon, towards the valley of Ajalon." God heard his prayer and the sun and the moon stood still, thus enabling him to continue the pursuit and to complete the destruction of the enemy. " There was not before, nor after, so long a day, the Lord obeying the voice of a man, and fighting for Israel !" (Jos. x. 14). The five kings themselves were captured and slain, and their bodies hung on gibbets till evening.

By such victories Josue made himself master of Southern Palestine from Cadesbarne to Gaza, after which he returned with all Israel to the camp at Galgal.

Another confederacy having been formed under Jabin, king of Asor, Josue by a forced march reached the waters of Merom, and suddenly fell upon the enemy, whom he routed and put to flight. The Israelites pursued them and cut them down as they fled; their chariots they burnt; their horses they rendered powerless; Asor itself they set on fire, and put all the inhabitants to the sword. For seven years Josue was occupied in overcoming these numerous kings who still held out in their fortified cities (Jos. viii.-xi.).

CHAPTER LVI

DISTRIBUTION OF THE LAND—DEATH OF JOSUE, B.C. 1434

After Josue had conquered the land, he divided it by lot among nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasses. The other half of this tribe and the tribes of Ruben and Gad had already been assigned their portions by Moses on the east side of the Jordan.

In the meantime the Israelites had removed to Silo, with the Tabernacle of the Testimony, after having had their camp in Galgal for fully seven years; and it is supposed that the Tabernacle continued at Silo for upwards of three centuries, till the days of Samuel. It was there, before the Tabernacle, that Josue cast lots for the land.

In the course of the conquest of Chanaan not all the inhabitants

were destroyed, but a great part of the country remained in the possession of its original owners. God chose to have some of the ancient inhabitants in the country to try the fidelity of His people, and to punish them should they fail in their duty to Him.

Josue lived but ten years after the distribution of the land. Shortly before his death he assembled all the tribes of Israel in Sichem, and called and exhorted the ancients and the princes: "Turn not aside from the things that are written in the Book of the Law either to the right or to the left; but cleave unto the Lord your God, as you have done until this day. If you will embrace the errors of these nations that dwell among you, and make marriages with them, and join friendships, know you for a certainty that the Lord will not destroy them before your face, but they shall be a pit and a snare in your way. Behold this day I am going into the way of all the earth."

He then bade them choose whether they would serve the Lord or the false gods of the Amorrhites. "God forbid," they said, "that we should leave the Lord and serve strange gods. We will serve the Lord, for He is our God." Josue said to them: "You are witnesses that you yourselves have chosen the Lord to serve Him." They answered: "We are witnesses: we will serve the Lord, and we will be obedient to His commands."

Josue then renewed at Sichem, before the Ark, the words of the covenant, and taking a great stone and setting it up, he said to all the people: "Behold this stone shall be a testimony unto you that it hath heard all the words of the Lord which He hath spoken to you."

This was the last public act of Josue. He died peacefully at the age of 110 years, and was buried by his faithful people in the border of his own possession on Mount Ephraim. Shortly after his death Eleazar, the High Priest, also died, and was succeeded by his son Phinees, a man full of the greatest zeal and piety.

The bones of Joseph, which the Israelites had brought with them out of Egypt, were at length laid to rest at Sichem, in that part of the field which Jacob had bought of the sons of Hemor, the father of Sichem (Jos. xiii.-xxiv.).

Josue's greatest honour was to have been a striking figure of our Saviour, whose name he bore. After many toils and sufferings he introduced his people into the Promised Land, overthrew their enemies, and established them in peace. Our Saviour, too, by His sufferings, conquered the enemy of our salvation, and opened for us the gates of heaven, the true Land of Promise.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

This Book contains the history of what passed under the government of the Judges, who ruled Israel before the kings. These men, whom God raised up from time to time, exercised supreme power, yet without bearing any outward mark of royal authority, or imposing taxes, or making any alteration in the laws. They were guided by the declarations of the High Priest. The author of the Book was, according to general opinion, the prophet Samuel.

CHAPTER LVII

IDOLATRY OF THE ISRAELITES

AFTER the death of Josue the children of Israel consulted the Lord, and asked: "Who shall go up before us against the Chanaanites and be the leader of the war?" The Lord, by the mouth of the High Priest Phinees, made answer: "Juda shall go up: behold I have delivered the land into his hands." The tribe of Juda, therefore, took the lead.

About this time the cruelty of Adonibezec roused the attention of the Israelites. Seventy kings, who at different times had fallen into this tyrant's hands, he first maimed by cutting off their thumbs and great toes, and then amused himself by watching them feed like dogs on what he threw to them from his rich table.

Attacking Bezec, his capital, Juda and Simeon gained a great victory, and slew ten thousand of its inhabitants. The king, too, fell into their power, and was treated by them as he had previously treated the seventy kings. He acknowledged the justice of his punishment, saying: "As I have done, so hath God requited me." He died at Jerusalem, the lower city of which had been taken by the Israelites.

Many of the tribes proved unfaithful to the command of God bidding them exterminate their enemies. They contented themselves with making them tributary to them, at the same time securing to them their lives and property. They even entered into marriages with the idolatrous people of the land, imitated their manners, protected their altars, and in the end yielded to the worst of their abominations. Rebuked, however, by an angel of God, they were so overcome with sorrow for their transgressions that they named the spot *The Place of Weepers*.

But their repentance was not lasting, and soon they fell again into idolatry. This time God punished them by delivering many of them into the hands of plunderers, who took them and sold them to their enemies. Thus by their religious indifference did they bring themselves into the most serious difficulties; and those whom they had foolishly spared turned against them and proved the ruin both of their souls and their bodies.

The invariable punishment of their idolatries was that God abandoned them and delivered them over to the oppression of their enemies. As soon, however, as they humbled themselves and showed signs of repentance, He raised up among them valiant men called Judges, who delivered them from their heathen oppressors and renewed the ancient covenant. The names of the fifteen judges recorded in order are: (1) Othoniel, (2) Aod, (3) Samgar, (4) Debbora and Barac, (5) Gedeon, (6) Abimelech, (7) Thola, (8) Jair, (9) Jephte, (10) Abesan, (11) Ahialon, (12) Abdon, (13) Samson, (14) Heli, (15) Samuel (Judges i., ii.).

CHAPTER LVIII

DEBBORA AND BARAC

THE first three Judges whom God made use of to deliver Israel from their enemies were Othoniel, Aod, and Samgar; but soon they began again to return to their evil ways, and God permitted another oppressor to afflict them. Jabin, king of Chanaan, who reigned in Asor, in Northern Palestine, sent against them an army under the command of Sisara, a mighty general.

At this time Debbora, a prophetess, judged Israel. Sitting under a palm-tree, between Rama and Bethel, she was there consulted by the people, who were guided by her counsel and judgments.

Debbora sent for Barac, and said to him: "The Lord God of Israel hath commanded thee: Go, and lead an army to Mount Thabor, and thou shalt take with thee 10,000 fighting men; and I will bring unto thee in the place of the torrent Cison, Sisara and his chariots, and all his multitude, and will deliver them into thy hands."

Barac said to her: "If thou wilt come with me, I will go; if thou wilt not come with me, I will not go." Debbora answered: "I will go indeed with thee, but this time the victory shall not be attributed to thee, because Sisara shall be delivered into the hands of a woman." She therefore went with Barac to Cedes.

When word was brought to Sisara that Barac was gone up to Mount Thabor he gathered together his 900 chariots and all his army, and prepared for the attack. Debbora gave the signal to Barac: "Arise, for this is the day wherein the Lord hath delivered Sisara into thy hands: behold He is thy leader."

The Israelites fell with great fury on the ranks of the enemy. Even the elements seemed to come to their assistance, and struck terror into Sisara's forces. Dreadful storms of thunder and lightning arose, while the wind drove rain and hail into the face of the Chanaanites, and so confused their aim that their arrows and slings were of no advantage to them. Barac too, struck such terror into the enemy that Sisara himself leapt from his chariot and fled on foot.

In his flight Sisara came to the tent of Jahel, where, thinking himself secure from danger, he threw himself down on the floor to rest. "Give me," he said to Jahel, "a little water, for I am thirsty." She opened a bottle of milk, and when he had drunk thereof, he

said to her: "Stand before the door of the tent; and when any man shall come and inquire of thee if there is any man here, thou shalt say to him: There is none." He then presently fell asleep.

Now Jahel, seeing that he slept, took a long nail and a hammer, and softly approaching Sisara, she put the nail upon his temple, and with the hammer drove it through his brain fast into the ground. "And so passing from deep sleep to death, he fainted away and died."

Barac then coming up, she advanced to meet him and said: "Come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest." He followed her into the tent, and behold in front of him lay Sisara with the nail still fastened in his temples. To celebrate their victory over Sisara, Debbora and Barac sang a beautiful canticle of praise. Israel after this enjoyed peace for forty years (Judges iv., v.).

CHAPTER LIX

GEDEON, THE FIFTH JUDGE

THE Israelites, having again fallen into idolatry, were abandoned by God, and delivered over to the Madianites, who cruelly laid waste their country, and for seven years heaped upon them the most painful hardships. They even drove them to seek refuge in dens and caves, and to retreat into the mountain fastnesses.

In their sufferings the Israelites humbled themselves; and in answer to their cry for mercy God sent an angel to Gedeon, the son of Joas, of the tribe of Manasses, who, unknown to the Madianites, was at that time threshing wheat in his father's wine-press at Ephra. The angel, addressing him in the name of God, said: "The Lord is with thee, O most valiant of men. Go in this thy strength, and thou shalt deliver Israel out of the hand of Madian: know that I have sent thee."

"Behold," said Gedeon, "my family is the meanest in Manasses, and I am the least in my father's house. If I have found grace before thee, give me a sign that it is thou that speakest to me; and depart not till I return to thee."

Gedeon killed and boiled a kid; and when he had made unleavened loaves, he put the flesh of the kid into a basket, and the broth into a pot. These he carried to the oak where the angel was sitting, and presented them to him.

In obedience to the angel's command Gedeon laid the flesh and the unleavened loaves upon a rock close by, and poured the broth over them. The angel then touched the flesh and the loaves with the tip of the rod which he held in his hand, and immediately there arose from the rock a fire which consumed them. At once the stranger vanished. Then Gedeon knew that it was an angel who had visited him, and exclaimed: "I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face." There he built an altar to the Lord and called it *The Lord's Peace*.

That night, by the command of the Lord, Gedeon left the house, and with ten chosen servants destroyed the altar of Baal, and cut down the grove which was about the altar.

The next day the people were filled with astonishment to find the altar of Baal destroyed and the grove cut down, and suspicion falling upon Gedeon, they said to Joas: " Bring out thy son hither that he may die, because he hath destroyed the altar and the grove of Baal." Joas answered them: " Are you the avengers of Baal that you fight for him? If he be a god, let him revenge himself on him that hath cast down his altar." From that day Gedeon was called Jerobaal (*let Baal plead*).

Shortly after this event, the Madianites and the Amalecites crossed the Jordan and encamped in the valley of Jezrael. But Gedeon, filled with the Spirit of God, sounded his trumpet, and called the Israelites to arms. As many as 32,000 responded to his call.

Before entering upon his task, Gedeon besought the Lord to confirm his mission by a further sign. Even a double sign was granted him. That night a fleece was spread on the ground, and early the next morning when Gedeon went to the spot, the fleece was found to be saturated with dew, while the earth around was as dry as before. " Let not thy wrath, O Lord," he prayed, " be kindled against me if I try once more. I pray that the fleece only may be dry, and all the ground wet with dew." God granted this prayer also.

Then Gedeon prepared with all his army to march against the enemy. But God said to him: " The people that are with thee are too many, and Madian shall not be delivered into their hands, lest Israel should glory against Me and say: I was delivered by my own strength. Proclaim in the hearing of all: Whosoever is fearful and timorous let him return." Immediately 22,000 men returned home, thus leaving Gedeon with only 10,000.

Even this number was too great for the Divine purpose. God said to Gedeon: " The people are still too many; bring them to the waters, and there I will try them." Now of the 10,000, all, with the exception of 300, fell down on their knees and eagerly applied their lips to the water, while the remaining few merely stooped down, and taking water up in the hollow of their hands, raised it to their lips. God said to Gedeon: " By the 300 men who lifted the water in their hands I will save you, and deliver Madian into thy hand. Let all the rest of the people return to their place."

That night the Lord said to Gedeon: " Arise, and go down into the enemy's camp; but if thou be afraid to go alone, let Phara thy servant go down with thee."

Gedeon took with him his servant Phara, and crept in the most cautious manner among the enemy's tents. His attention was drawn to one tent in particular, in which he overheard one of the Madianites relating to a companion a dream which he had had. " I dreamt a dream," he said, " and it seemed to me as if a hearth-cake of barley-bread rolled and came down into the camp of Madian; and when it was come to a tent, it struck it and beat it down flat to the ground." His comrade said: " This is nothing else but the sword of Gedeon, for the Lord hath delivered Madian and all the camp into his hand." The story of what he had heard made

Gedeon's men eager to advance to the attack with as little delay as possible.

Gedeon now divided his followers into three companies. To each of his men he gave a trumpet, an empty pitcher, and a lighted torch bidding him conceal his torch within the pitcher, and observe the strictest silence until he received the signal agreed upon. "What you shall see me do," he said, "do you the same. I will go into one part of the camp, and when my trumpet shall sound, do you also blow the trumpets on every side of the camp, and shout together to the Lord and to Gedeon."

The 300 took up the posts assigned to them, and about midnight was heard the loud blare of a trumpet. Before its echoes had died away, there arose from three sides of the camp a sound that filled the enemy with terror. No sooner had Gedeon's men heard the signal than, dashing their pitchers to the ground, they suddenly displayed their torches, and sent forth a deafening blast with their trumpets, following it up with the cry: "The sword of the Lord and of Gedeon."

The Madianites, filled with consternation at the thought that they were surrounded by a vast army, rose to their feet, and cut to pieces all whom they met, failing in their fright to distinguish friend from foe. Great numbers were slain, while the rest, hotly pursued by Gedeon and his 300, fled towards the Jordan. The Ephraimites hastily seized the fords of the river, and thus prevented most of the enemy from crossing.

As a reward for his great services the Israelites wished to make Gedeon their king, and to make the royal dignity hereditary in his family. He, however, declined the kingly title, and merely requested that they would bring him the golden earrings and other ornaments taken from the conquered. This they willingly did; and from their offerings he made an ephod—a priestly garment—which he kept in his native city, Ephra.

For forty years, as long as Gedeon was Judge, the country enjoyed peace. After his death one of his sons, named Abimelech, secured to himself the supreme power through the assistance of the people of Sichem. All his brothers, except Joatham who escaped, he put to death.

Soon, however, the Sichemites began to detest Abimelech as the murderer of his brethren, and revolted; but he levelled their city to the ground, and strewed salt on the spot where the city had stood. Many of the inhabitants fled to Thebes, against which he next directed his vengeance. But while he was in the very act of setting fire to the gates, behold a woman hurled from above a piece of a millstone, which struck him on the head and broke his skull. That he might not die by a woman's hand, he bade his armour-bearer dispatch him with his sword. Thus Abimelech died miserably. After him Thola and Jair successively ruled Israel (Judges vi.-x.).

The first miracle of the fleece represented the Jewish nation, favoured with so many graces, while the rest of the world was dry

and barren; the second, the rest of the world watered with dew from heaven by the coming of Christ, while the synagogue was deprived of this favour.

CHAPTER LX

JEPHTE, THE NINTH JUDGE

YET again the children of Israel fell into sin. They abandoned the Lord and adored the gods of their neighbours. Attacked at length and oppressed by the surrounding nations, they cast aside all the idols of their strange gods, and served the Lord, and He was touched with their miseries.

At this time the Ammonites had encamped at Galaad and the Israelites at Maspha. At first the Israelites were concerned as to who should lead them, but finally fixed upon Jephte, whom they entreated to assume the command. He accepted the dignity thus offered him, and, as leader of the Israelites, sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites bidding him cease from troubling their land; but in vain.

Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephte, and he gathered an army and prepared for battle. Before marching out to meet the enemy he made this vow to the Lord: "Whosoever shall come forth out of the doors of my house and shall meet me when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, the same will I offer a holocaust to the Lord." The battle was begun, and the victory fell to Jephte. For a long time after this the power of the Ammonites was utterly broken.

But when Jephte was returning in triumph, his daughter, who was his only child, met him, accompanied by her maids, having gone out to welcome him with timbrel and with dance. As soon as Jephte saw her he rent his garments, and in the bitterness of his grief exclaimed: "Alas, my daughter, thou hast deceived me; and thou thyself art deceived; for I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I can do no other thing." He then told her of the vow he had made.

"My father," she answered, "do unto me whatsoever thou hast promised, since the victory has been granted to thee, and revenge of thy enemies. Grant me only this: Let me go, that I may go about the mountains for two months, and may bewail my virginity with my companions."

Jephte granted her request; and when the two months were expired, she returned to her father, who did to her as he had vowed, and *she knew no man—i.e.*, she never married. But the common opinion, followed by the generality of the holy Fathers, is that she was offered as a holocaust in consequence of her father's vow.

The Ephraimites now turned against Jephte, complaining that they had not been called upon to take part in the recent enterprise. Jephte, however, asserted that he had called them, and that they had refused to respond to his appeal.

As the explanation did not satisfy the Ephraimites, the men of

Galaad rose at the command of Jephte and utterly defeated them. To prevent them from escaping into their own territory, they seized and held the fords of the Jordan; and when any man drew near and begged pemission to cross the river, he was asked: "Art thou an Ephraimite?" If he answered "No," he was required to pronounce the word "*Shibboleth*." If he answered "*Sibboleth*," he was straightway seized and slain; for an Ephraimite could not sound the *sh*, and his pronunciation of the word betrayed him. After Jephte, Abesan and Ahialon and Abdon judged Israel (Judges x.-xii.).

CHAPTER LXI

SAMSON, THE THIRTEENTH JUDGE

After the death of Abdon we find Israel falling away again, and for forty years oppressed by the Philistines.

Moved with pity by their cry of repentance, God raised up a deliverer for them in the person of Samson, of whom many wonderful deeds are recorded.

At this time there was a man of the tribe of Dan, named Manue, whose wife had for many years remained childless. An angel of the Lord appeared to her and said: "Behold thou shalt bear a son: beware thou drink no wine, nor strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing, for the child shall be a Nazarite of God from his infancy to the day of his death." Now a Nazarite must abstain from everything that may make a man drunk. He must let his hair grow, and avoid defiling himself by going into the presence of the dead. When Manue was informed by his wife of what had happened, he prayed that the man of God might come again and teach them what they ought to do concerning the child that was to be born.

One day, while the wife of Manue was sitting alone in the field, the angel appeared to her again. At once she recognised him, and ran for her husband. Manue hastened to the spot; and not knowing that the stranger was an angel, he asked him his name. The angel replied: "Why askest thou my name, which is wonderful?" Then Manue took a victim and offered it to the Lord, who doth wonderful things; and he and his wife looked on.

When the flame from the altar went up towards heaven, the angel also ascended in the flame, at sight of which Manue and his wife prostrated themselves on the ground. For the first time Manue understood that he had been speaking with an angel, and he trembled with fear, saying: "We shall certainly die, because we have seen God." In due time a son was born to them, and they called his name Samson.

One day, when Samson was grown to man's estate, he went down to Thamnatha, and there conceived a great affection for one of the daughters of the Philistines, whom he wished to marry. Manue said to him: "Is there no woman among the daughters of thy brethren that thou wilt take a wife of the Philistines?" But, as Samson's purpose could not be shaken, his parents at length gave their consent to the marriage, and accompanied him to Thamnatha.

When they were drawing near to the town, Samson was set upon by a raging lion. Though unarmed, he was not afraid; for the Spirit of the Lord coming upon him, he seized the lion, and tore it to pieces as he would have torn a kid. He did not even mention the fact to his parents, who, having gone on in front, were unconscious of what had happened.

Some days after, Samson chanced to come by the same spot, and turning aside to see the carcass of the lion, he found a swarm of bees and a honeycomb in its mouth. He took the honey to eat, and offered some to his father and mother.

The marriage feast lasted seven days, during which time thirty young men of the Philistines were invited to take part in the rejoicings. While they were making merry, Samson proposed a riddle to the young men, promising thirty changes of garments to him who should guess it, but requiring the same number himself in case of failure to answer it within the seven days of the feast. This was the riddle: "Out of the eater there came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."

For three days the Philistine youths tried in vain to expound the riddle; and filled with anger at the thought of failure, they said to Samson's wife: "Soothe thy husband, and persuade him to tell thee what the riddle meaneth, or we will burn thee and thy father's house."

She wept, and said to Samson: "Thou dost not love me, therefore thou wilt not expound to me the riddle." Samson replied: "I would not tell it to my father and mother, and how can I tell it to thee?" She continued to weep, till at length, overcome by her tears, Samson explained the riddle to her.

Straightway she revealed the meaning to the young men, who, coming to Samson, said: "What is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion?" But he answered them: "If you had not ploughed with my heifer, you had not found out my riddle." The Spirit of the Lord again came upon him, and he went and slew thirty men of Ascalon, whose garments he took away and gave to the young men who had declared the riddle. But filled with anger at what his wife had done, he left her, and went back to his father's house (Judges xiii., xiv.).

CHAPTER LXII

SAMSON'S EXPLOITS—HIS DEATH

After a while Samson returned to visit his wife, and brought her as a present a kid of the flock; but finding that in the meantime her father had given her in marriage to another, his anger knew no bounds. "From this day," he said, "I shall be blameless in what I do against the Philistines, for I will do you evils."

He went out and caught three hundred foxes, which he tied two and two by their tails. He then fastened a lighted torch to each pair and let them go into the fields of the Philistines. They ran amid the ripe corn, and into the vineyards and olive-groves, all of which

they utterly destroyed. The Philistines were enraged, not so much against Samson as against his father-in-law, whom they considered responsible for their misfortunes, and burnt his house down over his head. Both he and Samson's wife perished in the flames.

Samson's vengeance did not stop here. Shortly afterwards he slew a great number of the Philistines, then retired to the rock of Etam, where he dwelt in a cave. Through fear of the Philistines, the men of Juda, to the number of 3,000, surrounded the cave, determined to deliver Samson into the hands of his enemies. He made but one request, that they would not kill him, and having received their promise to this effect, he allowed himself to be bound with two new cords and handed over to the Philistines.

The Philistines received him with a shout of joy. But the Spirit of the Lord at that moment came upon Samson. He snapped the cords which bound him as though they were but threads; and seeing the jawbone of an ass lying near at hand, he seized it, and with this crude weapon laid a thousand Philistines low. The rest fled in consternation. From this feat of Samson the place was afterwards known as the *Place of the Jawbone*.

His exertion brought on an excessive thirst, and he cried to the Lord: "Thou hast given this very great deliverance and victory, and behold I die of thirst." From a tooth in the jawbone God caused to issue such a stream of water that Samson was enabled to quench his thirst, and his strength and vigour were restored.

On another occasion the Philistines saw Samson enter a house in Gaza. They thereupon secretly made fast the gates of the city, and placed men in ambush, so as to cut off every means of escape. But Samson rose in the middle of the night, put on his shoulders the gates of the city, together with their posts and beams, and, to the astonishment of his enemies, bore them in triumph up the hill that faces Hebron.

After this he fell in love with a woman named Dalila. The princes of the Philistines came to her and said: "Learn of him wherein his strength lieth, and how we may be able to overcome and bind him; and we will give thee everyone of us eleven hundred pieces of silver."

Dalila said to Samson: "Tell me, I beseech thee, wherein thy greatest strength lieth, and what is the binding thou couldst not loose." Samson said to her: "If I be bound with seven cords made of sinews not yet dry, I shall be weak like other men." The Philistines supplied her with seven such cords, and sent a body of men to lie in wait to rush upon him at a given signal from Dalila. While Samson was asleep, she bound him with the cords, and of a sudden cried out: "The Philistines are upon thee, Samson." Instantly he snapped his bonds as a man would break a thread of burnt tow, and sprang to his feet.

Dalila then said to him: "Behold thou mockest me; but now tell me wherein thou mayest be bound. He answered: "If I be bound with new ropes, I shall be weak and like other men." But the result was as before.

"How long dost thou tell me lies?" she said. "Show me wherein thou mayest be bound." Samson replied: "If thou plattest the seven locks of my head with a lace, and tying them round about with a nail, fastenest it in the ground, I shall be weak." While he slept she did as he had said, but all to no purpose; he freed himself with the utmost ease.

Again she began to press him, and upbraided him with want of love for her, till at last, worn out with her repeated requests, he disclosed the truth to her: "The razor hath never come upon my head, for I am a Nazarite: if my head be shaven, my strength shall depart from me." While, therefore, he was in a deep sleep, she had him deprived of his locks; then pushing him with her hand, she exclaimed: "Samson, behold the Philistines." Awakening suddenly he said in his mind: "I will go out as I did before, and shake myself."

But he did not know that the Lord was departed from him. His enemies seized him, and he was powerless to withstand them. They bored out his eyes, and binding him in chains led him in triumph to Gaza, where he was condemned to the task of grinding corn in prison. After a time, however, his hair began to grow again and his strength to return with it.

The princes of the Philistines were gathered together to offer sacrifice to their god Dagon and to hold a feast in his honour, because he had delivered Samson into their hands: and in the height of their revelry they ordered Samson to be brought forth to make sport for them. Samson asked the boy who conducted him to let him rest against the pillars that supported the temple. Now the temple was full of men and women, and all the princes of the Philistines were there. Moreover, about 3,000 persons of both sexes were assembled on the roof and upper parts of the building to behold Samson. But he called upon the Lord, saying: "O Lord God, remember me, and restore to me now my former strength, that I may revenge myself on my enemies, and for the loss of my two eyes I may take one revenge."

After he had finished his prayer, he seized a pillar with each hand, and praying that he might die with the Philistines, he shook the pillars with so much strength that the temple crashed down in ruins; and more were killed in his death than he had killed in his life. His kinsmen found his body and buried it in the tomb of his father, Manue. He had judged Israel twenty years (Judges xv., xvi.).

THE BOOK OF RUTH

This Book receives its name from the person whose history is recorded in it. From being a Gentile, Ruth became a convert to the true faith, and marrying Booz, the great-grandfather of David, she was thus one from whom the Messias was descended. The events recorded took place under some of the Judges.

CHAPTER LXIII

THE STORY OF RUTH

IN the days of one of the Judges there came a famine in the land; and a certain man of Bethlehem-Juda, named Elimelech, together with his wife Noemi and two sons, Mahalon and Chelion, went to sojourn in the land of Moab. Here Elimelech died, and his two sons took wives of the women of that country, one of whom was named Orpha, the other Ruth. About ten years afterwards Mahalon and Chelion both died, and Noemi was left with her two daughters-in-law.

When at length the famine ceased in the land of Israel, Noemi resolved to return to her own country, and requested Orpha and Ruth to go home to their own people, praying the Lord to deal mercifully with them as they had dealt with the dead and with her. She then kissed them and bade them farewell.

Orpha and Ruth, however, with tears declared again and again: "We will go on with thee to thy people." Orpha was at length prevailed upon to go back, but Ruth, clinging to Noemi, exclaimed: "Be not against me, to desire that I shall leave thee and depart; for whithersoever thou shalt go, I will go; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. The land that shall receive thee dying, in the same will I die, and there will I be buried." Noemi was overcome, and the two set out together for Bethlehem.

When they were come to the city, the report quickly spread that Noemi had returned, and the women went forth to welcome her. But she bade them no longer call her Noemi (*beautiful*), but Mara (*bitter*).

Soon after their return to Bethlehem, Ruth said to Noemi: "If thou wilt, I will go into the field and glean the ears of corn that escape the hands of the reapers." Noemi gave her consent, and it chanced that Ruth went to a field that belonged to a man named Booz, who was very rich and powerful, and a kinsman of Noemi's former husband, Elimelech.

While Ruth was in the field, Booz came to see the reapers, and said: "The Lord be with you." They answered: "The Lord bless thee." He then inquired of the overseer of the reapers who the stranger was. The man answered: "This is the Moabitess who came with Noemi: she hath been in the field from morning till now, and hath not gone home for one moment." Booz said to Ruth: "Hear me, daughter; do not go to glean in any other field, but keep with

my maids, for I have charged my young men not to molest thee; and if thou be thirsty go to the vessels, and drink of the waters whereof the servants drink. At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar." He then gave secret orders to his servants purposely to let fall handfuls of corn in her way that she might glean them without shame.

In the evening Ruth, full of joy, returned to Noemi, after beating out with a rod as much barley from her gleanings as would fill an ephi (6½ *gallons*); and she told her mother-in-law all that had befallen her. For many days Ruth continued to glean near the maids of Booz.

One day Noemi said to Ruth: "My daughter, I will seek rest for thee, and provide that it may be well with thee." She hoped that Booz would, according to the law, take Ruth in marriage if others more nearly akin should refuse to espouse their kinsman's widow. She accordingly directed Ruth how to proceed in seeking her lawful rights.

Booz said to her: "I do not deny myself to be of near kin, but there is another nearer than I. If he will take thee by the right of kin, all is well; but if he will not, I will undoubtedly take thee, as the Lord liveth."

The next day Booz went to the gate of the city and sat there; and when he saw the kinsman of whom he had spoken going by, he said to him: "Turn aside for a little while, and sit down here." He next invited ten of the ancients of the city, and bade them also sit down. He then said in their presence that Noemi wished to sell a part of a field that had belonged to Elimelech, and that if his kinsman took it by the right of kindred, he must also take Ruth, the Moabitess, who had been the wife of the deceased, to raise up the name of the kinsman in his inheritance.

The man made answer: "I yield up my right of next of kin, for I must not cut off the posterity of my own family. Do thou make use of my privilege, which I profess I do willingly forego."

Now the shoe of the one who gave up his right was taken off in the presence of the elders, and handed to the one to whom he wished the right to be transferred. This being done, Booz said to those around him: "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and have taken to wife Ruth, the Moabitess, to raise up the name of the deceased in his inheritance."

Booz married Ruth, and the Lord blessed them with a son, whom they named Obed. Noemi, full of joy, laid the child in her bosom and was nurse to it. In time Obed became the father of Isai or Jesse, the father of David.

THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

OTHERWISE CALLED

THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS

This and the following Book, besides giving us the history of Samuel, contain also the lives of the two kings, Saul and David, whom Samuel anointed.

CHAPTER LXIV

HELI AND SAMUEL, THE LAST JUDGES

THERE was a certain Levite of Mount Ephraim, named Elcana, who had two wives, Anna and Phenenna. Phenenna had several children, but Anna was childless, and for this had to endure the bitter taunts of Phenenna. Overwhelmed with grief, Anna prayed God to be mindful of her and remove her reproach.

Every year, on the great festival days, Elcana went with his family to Silo to adore the Lord and to offer sacrifice. On one of these occasions Anna went to the Tabernacle, and with many tears uttered this prayer: " O Lord of hosts, if Thou wilt be mindful of me, Thy handmaid, and wilt give to Thy servant a man-child, I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head."

While she was weeping and praying, Heli the High Priest observed her; and when he saw her lips move, but did not hear her voice, he thought she was drunk, and asked her to retire and hide her shame. Anna answered: " Not so, my lord; but I have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thy handmaid for one of the daughters of Belial, for out of the abundance of my sorrows and grief have I spoken till now." Then Heli said to her: " Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition." Anna rose up, full of joy and hope; and the Lord rewarded her faith by giving her a son, whom she named Samuel.

When Samuel was weaned, Anna brought him to the Tabernacle at Silo, and consecrated him to God all the days of his life as a Nazarite. She said to Heli: " I beseech thee, my lord, I am that woman who stood before thee here. For this child did I pray, and the Lord hath granted my petition; therefore I have lent him to the Lord all the days of his life." She then broke forth into that beautiful canticle of praise in which she foretold the glory of the Messias and His Church (1 Kings ii. 1-10). Heli blessed Elcana and Anna, and they went back to Ramatha; but the boy Samuel remained in the Tabernacle under the care of the High Priest.

The sons of Heli, Ophni and Phinees, were very wicked, and took of the offerings, not only what lawfully belonged to them, but

whatever else they pleased, and by their abominable deeds of lust at the very door of the Tabernacle, withdrew the people from coming to sacrifice to the Lord. Men complained to Heli of their wickedness, but instead of punishing them, he merely reproved them, saying: "Do not so, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear, that you make the people of the Lord to transgress."

At length there came to Heli a man of God, who said to him: "Thus saith the Lord: Thou hast honoured thy sons rather than Me, to eat the first-fruits of every sacrifice of My people Israel. Whosoever shall glorify Me, him will I glorify, but they that despise Me shall be despised. Thou shalt see thy rival in the temple in all the prosperity of Israel, and there shall not be an old man in thy house for ever. And this shall be a sign to thee that shall come upon thy two sons, Ophni and Phinees: in one day they shall both of them die. And I will raise up a faithful priest who shall do according to My heart" (1 Kings i., ii.).

CHAPTER LXV

DEATH OF HELI

When Heli was old, and his eyes were grown dim, the boy Samuel, who had retired to rest within the Tabernacle, was suddenly aroused from sleep by a voice calling him by name. Thinking it was Heli who called him, he rose up at once, and going to the High Priest said: "Here am I, for thou didst call me." He said to him: "I did not call thee: go back to sleep."

Scarcely had Samuel composed himself to sleep again when the voice was heard calling him a second time. Again he ran off to the High Priest and said: "Here am I, for thou calledst me." Heli answered: "I did not call thee, my son: return and sleep."

After the same thing had happened a third time, Heli understood that the Lord called the boy, and he said to Samuel: "Go and sleep; and if He shall call thee any more, thou shalt say: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

Samuel withdrew to take his rest; and when the voice called him for the fourth time, he answered: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." The Lord said to him: "I have foretold unto Heli that I will judge his house for ever, because he knew that his sons did wickedly and did not chastise them."

Samuel then slept; but when morning was come he was afraid to tell the vision to Heli. However, when Heli bade him hide nothing of what was said to him, he obeyed. Then Heli answered: "It is the Lord: let Him do what is good in His sight."

In those days the Philistines were at war with the Israelites, whom they routed and put to flight, after slaying as many as 4,000 of them. The survivors returned to the camp, broken and dispirited. "Why hath the Lord defeated us to-day before the Philistines?" they exclaimed; "let us fetch the Ark from Silo, that it may save us from the hand of our enemies." And they had the Ark brought into the camp.

Its appearance, accompanied by Ophni and Phinees, was the signal for an outburst of joy; and such a shout of triumph arose that the Philistines, hearing it, exclaimed: "God is come into their camp: woe to us. Who shall deliver us from the hands of these high gods?" Their leaders, however, bade them take courage and behave like men.

The battle was begun, and again the Israelites were routed with a loss of 30,000 men. Ophni and Phinees were among the slain, and worse still, the Ark of God was taken by the enemy. A man of Benjamin, who had escaped from the field of battle, arrived breathless at Silo, with his clothes rent and his head covered with dust, the bearer of the terrible news; and soon cries of lamentation were heard throughout the city.

"What meaneth the noise of this uproar?" asked Heli. At this moment the man of Benjamin came up and said: "I am he that came from the battle, and have fled out of the field this day." Heli eagerly asked: "What is there done, my son?" "Israel is fled," he answered, "thy two sons are dead, and the Ark of God is taken." No sooner had he mentioned the Ark than Heli fell backwards from his stool, and broke his neck and died. He had judged Israel forty years (1 Kings iii., iv.).

CHAPTER LXVI

THE ARK AMONGST THE PHILISTINES

From the *Stone of Help* the Philistines carried the Ark to Azotus, and placed it in the temple of their god Dagon. The next day the idol of Dagon was found lying upon its face on the ground before the Ark. They set it up again, but on entering the temple the very next morning they found it lying upon the threshold with its head and arms broken off. God, moreover, afflicted the Azotians by causing their bodies to be so tormented with a painful disease that many of the people died. Mice, too, in swarms overran their fields and destroyed their crops.

At length the people in alarm began to exclaim: "The Ark of the God of Israel shall not stay with us; for His hand is heavy upon us, and upon Dagon our god." They then took counsel to know what they ought to do with the Ark, and resolved to move it from place to place; but wherever it went it carried disease and death to old and young alike. The cry of the people went up to heaven, for the fear of death was upon them, and the hand of God was exceedingly heavy.

After the Ark had been seven months in their land, the Philistines, by the advice of their priests and wise men, made ready a new cart on which they placed the Ark, and beside it a little box containing golden offerings to the God of Israel. To the cart they harnessed two kine that had never before been yoked, and that had their calves shut up at home. The kine were then to be left to go their own way, and if they took the direct road to Bethsames, it was to be a sign that their evils had come upon them from the God of the Israelites;

but if they went by the other way, then might it be known that their troubles were the result of chance.

No sooner were the kine let loose than they went lowing in the direction of Bethsames, while the lords of the Philistines followed at a distance to see the result.

As soon as the reapers in the valley saw the Ark approaching Bethsames, they ran forward with joy to meet it. The kine continued their onward course till they came into the field of Josue, a Bethsamite, where they stopped of their own accord. In the field was a great stone, upon which the Levites rested the Ark and the box containing the golden offerings, and having cut up the wood of the cart, they killed the kine and laid them upon it, and offered them as a holocaust to the Lord. And the princes of the Philistines saw what was done, and returned to Accaron that same day.

Now, moved by curiosity, the Bethsamites did what was unlawful even for the Levites to do. Drawing aside the covering of the Ark, they presumed to look into it, and for their irreverence many were struck dead upon the spot. With every token of respect the Ark was then conveyed to the house of Abinadab, in Gabaa, where it remained until the days of King David. Abinadab was a pious Levite, and his son Eleazar was sanctified and appointed to keep the Ark of the Lord.

Samuel seized the opportunity to address the people. "If you turn to the Lord with all your heart," he said, "put away the strange gods from among you. Prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." They listened attentively to his words, and repenting of their sins, turned with all their hearts to serve the Lord.

The Israelites then assembled at Maspha, according to the command of Samuel, and there they prayed and fasted, confessing: "We have sinned against the Lord." The Philistines, confident of an easy victory, marched suddenly upon them. But Samuel bid his people be of good cheer, and promised that God would come to their help. In answer to his prayer, God sent a violent thunderstorm upon the enemy, who fled in terror, pursued by the victorious Israelites even to the borders of their own country.

Samuel's office of Judge was now established. He ruled over Israel for the rest of his life, probably as sole Judge for twenty years, and then conjointly with Saul. When he was old, he appointed his sons to act under him, but they walked not in the way of their father. Carried away by avarice, they accepted bribes, and so perverted justice that people in their discontent demanded to have a king to rule over them (1 Kings v.-viii.).

PART V

FROM THE INSTITUTION OF THE MONARCHY TO THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM ON THE DEATH OF SOLOMON

B.C. 1095 TO B.C. 975

CHAPTER LXVII

SAUL ANOINTED KING

THE demand of the people for a king grieved Samuel, and he prayed God to direct him. God said to him: "Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to thee, for they have not rejected thee but Me, that I should not reign over them; but foretell to them the right of the king that shall reign over them."

Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people, and said: "The king will take your sons, and put them in his chariots, and make them his horsemen, and his running footmen to run before his chariots. He will appoint of them to plough his fields, and to reap his corn, and to make him arms and chariots." And many other exactions he named that would be required of them. The people nevertheless cried out: "Nay, but there shall be a king over us. We will be like other nations; and our king shall judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles for us."

Now there was at this time a man of Benjamin whose name was Cis, and he had a son whose name was Saul, a choice and goodly man: from his shoulders upward he appeared above all the people.

On one occasion when his father's asses had strayed, Saul, accompanied by one of his servants, was sent in quest of them. After searching for a long time in vain they came to Ramatha; and Saul said to his servant: "Come let us return, lest perhaps my father forget his asses, and be concerned for us." The servant said to him: "Behold there is a man of God in this city: let us go thither; perhaps he may tell us of our way." And they went into the city where the man of God was.

As they were walking in the city, they met Samuel, who was going to offer a sacrifice in the high place. The Lord had spoken to Samuel the day before, saying: "To-morrow, about this same hour I will send thee a man of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be ruler over My people Israel." The Lord now said to him: "Behold the man of whom I spoke to thee. This man shall reign over My people."

Coming up to Samuel, Saul said: "Tell me, I pray thee, where is the house of the seer (*prophet*)?" Samuel answered: "I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place that you may eat with me

to-day. I will let thee go in the morning, and will tell thee all that is in thy heart. As for the asses which were lost three days ago, be not solicitous, because they are found. And for whom shall be the best things of Israel? Shall they not be for thee and thy father's house?" Saul answered: "Am I not of the least tribe of Israel, and my kindred the least among all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then hast thou spoken this word to me?"

Samuel conducted Saul and his servant to the feast, and gave them a place at the head of those that were invited. When the banquet was over, they went down from the high place into the city, and Samuel had a bed prepared for Saul on the flat roof of his house

Early the next morning Samuel accompanied Saul out of the city, and when they had gone a little distance said to him: "Tell thy servant to pass on, but stand thou still awhile, that I may tell thee the word of the Lord." The prophet thereupon took out a little vial of oil, and poured it upon Saul's head, saying: "Behold the Lord hath anointed thee to be prince over His inheritance." Saul then returned home, and the Lord gave him another heart.

On his way home Saul fell in with a company of prophets, and, the Spirit of the Lord coming upon him, he too began to prophesy. "What is this?" people asked. "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Samuel next assembled all the tribes of Israel at Maspha, and required them to cast lots to know whom God had chosen to be their king. The lot fell upon the tribe of Benjamin, and at last upon Saul the son of Cis. But Saul, judging himself unfit, hid himself, and when they sought him he was nowhere to be found. God, however, made known his hiding-place; and when he was led before the assembly, Samuel said: "Surely you see him whom the Lord hath chosen?" Thereupon the people with one voice cried out: "Long live the king!"

Samuel next made known to the people the law of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book which he laid up before the Lord in the sanctuary. He then dismissed them every one to his own house. Saul also returned to Gabaa, accompanied by a part of the army whose hearts God had touched (1 Kings ix., x.).

CHAPTER LXVIII

SAUL'S VICTORY OVER THE AMMONITES

Soon after Saul's election as king, Naas, king of the Ammonites, laid siege to Jabes-Galaad, and inspired such terror into the citizens that they offered to make a treaty with him. Naas replied: "On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may pluck out all your right eyes, and make you a reproach in all Israel." He allowed them seven days in which to make up their minds.

Messengers were sent to Saul at Gabaa to inform him of the fierce threats of Naas, and to invoke his aid. Saul was absent when the messengers arrived; but when he came home from the field with the oxen, and learnt how matters stood, his anger was roused to fury. At once he took and slew a yoke of oxen, and cut them into pieces

which he sent through all Israel with the message: "Whosoever shall not come forth and follow Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen."

The people came out as one man; and Saul, at the head of his army, fell upon the camp of the Ammonites, and so scattered them that "not two of them were left together." After this Saul was anointed with all solemnity at Galgal, and the occasion was celebrated with great rejoicing by all the men of Israel.

Now it was that Samuel gave his parting advice to the people, and besought them ever to fear the Lord, and serve Him, and hearken to His voice. To add weight to his words he promised a sign from heaven. At his prayer the sky, which was cloudless, suddenly became overcast; the thunder rolled, and the rain came down in torrents so that the people were terrified. "Fear not," he said, "but yet depart not from following the Lord, and the Lord will not forsake you, because He has sworn to make you His people." He then bade them farewell, and thus brought to a close the twenty years of his being sole Judge over Israel (1 Kings xi., xii.).

CHAPTER LXIX

FIRST DISOBEDIENCE OF SAUL—HIS RASH VOW

After Saul had reigned for two years, a new war broke out against the Philistines, who encamped with a mighty army at Machmas, and from there plundered the whole country. In order to deprive the Israelites of weapons, they did not allow a smith to remain in Israel, lest the people should procure for themselves swords and spears. Such terror did the Philistines inspire that Saul's followers began to drop off, and for safety fled to the woods and the rocks, where they concealed themselves in caves, while many passed over the Jordan. Saul was left with only 600 men.

Samuel had commanded Saul in the name of the Lord to wait for him seven days at Galgal; and as it was now the seventh day, and Samuel had not arrived, Saul offered the sacrifices himself. Hardly, however, was the holocaust consumed when Samuel was seen approaching. Saul went out to meet him; but when Samuel found that the sacrifices were already ended, he said to Saul: "What hast thou done?" Saul answered: "Because I saw that the people slipped from me, and thou wast not come according to the days appointed, forced by necessity, I offered the holocaust."

Samuel said to him: "Thou hast done foolishly, and hast not kept the commandments of the Lord thy God. If thou hadst not done this, the Lord would have established thy kingdom over Israel for ever; but thy kingdom shall not continue." Samuel then left him and went to Gabaa. Saul also went to Gabaa, accompanied by his son Jonathan and the 600 faithful followers.

At length Jonathan formed a secret and daring plan. He said to his armour-bearer: "Come let us go over to the garrison of the Philistines." Now their way to the enemy's camp lay between two

steep rocks; and as they went on together Jonathan said to his armour-bearer: "When the Philistines shall see us, if they tell us to stay till they come to us, let us stand in our place; but if they ask us to go up to them, let us go up, because the Lord hath delivered them into our hands: this shall be a sign to us."

They then revealed themselves to the Philistines, who called to them: "Come up to us, and we will show you a thing." Jonathan bade his companion follow him, and with great difficulty they reached a certain rock which, owing to its natural strength, had been left unguarded. Coming suddenly upon a group of Philistines, they slew some twenty of them; and the rest of the Philistines, believing that the army of Israel had got into their camp, in their terror and confusion struck down one another. To increase their alarm, the earth quaked, and many of the Israelites who had concealed themselves in caves now came forth and joined in the pursuit.

Saul's sentinels, seeing the confusion in the Philistine camp, hurried to inform Saul, who ordered inquiries to be made if anyone had left the camp. Only then was it discovered that Jonathan and his armour-bearer were absent. The Israelites set up a mighty shout, and with Saul at their head rushed forth to complete the victory. That the pursuit might not be interrupted, Saul in his ardour exclaimed: "Cursed be the man that shall eat food till evening, till I be avenged on my enemies." This rash vow was communicated to the army.

Saul's men, spent with extreme hunger as they were, refrained from eating, all except one, Saul's own son, Jonathan, who was not aware of his father's vow. Faint and weary, Jonathan dipped the rod which he carried in his hand into a honeycomb, and raising it to his lips, ate of the honey. Being told of the curse that had been uttered, he became troubled in spirit, and bitterly complained of his father's rash words.

The pursuit was continued till evening, when the famished Israelites fell upon the spoils they had taken. After this, Saul, through the High Priest, consulted the Lord as to whether they should still follow after the fleeing Philistines; but no answer was returned. Attributing this to some hidden sin among his followers, Saul swore that the guilty one should die, even were it his own son Jonathan.

Lots were cast, and, to the surprise of all, they fell upon Saul and Jonathan; and being taken a second time, they fell upon Jonathan. Pressed to acknowledge his fault, Jonathan said: "I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod which was in my hand, and behold I must die."

But now the people interfered, saying: "This must not be. As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he hath wrought with God this day." Thus was Jonathan saved from death (1 Kings xiii., xiv.).

CHAPTER LXX

SAUL'S SECOND DISOBEDIENCE

GOD'S message, spoken by the lips of Samuel, came to Saul: "I have reckoned up all that Amalec hath done to Israel; how he opposed them when they came out of Egypt. Now, therefore, go and smite Amalec, and utterly destroy all that he hath. Spare him not, nor covet anything that is his; but slay both man and woman, child and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."

Saul assembled his men, and suddenly fell upon the enemy, whom he routed and pursued as far as Sur, on the very borders of Egypt. All the common people he put to death: but Agag their king he took prisoner, and spared the best of the flocks and herds, besides saving whatever was of value. To celebrate his victory he erected a triumphal arch at Carmel, and then returned to Galgal.

Meantime the word of the Lord came to Samuel: "It repenteth Me that I have made Saul king; for he hath forsaken Me, and hath not executed My commandments."

The prophet spent the night in tears and besought the Lord to forgive Saul; then rising up, he came to Galgal when Saul was in the act of offering a holocaust out of the choicest spoils which he had taken from Amalec. "What meaneth," said Samuel, "this bleating of the flocks which soundeth in my ears, and the lowing of the herds which I hear?" Saul answered: "They have brought them from Amalec; for the people spared the best of the sheep and herds that they might be sacrificed to the Lord thy God, but the rest we have slain."

Then Samuel said to Saul: "When thou wast a little one in thy own eyes, wast thou not made the head of the tribes in Israel? Why didst thou not hearken to the voice of the Lord?" Saul answered: "Yea, I have hearkened to the voice of the Lord, and have brought Agag, the king of Amalec, and Amalec I have slain; but the people took of the spoils sheep and oxen to offer sacrifice to the Lord their God in Galgal."

Samuel said to him: "Doth the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed? For obedience is better than sacrifice, and not to obey is like the crime of idolatry. Forasmuch, therefore, as thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord hath also rejected thee from being king."

Saul confessed his fault, saying: "I have sinned because I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and thy words, fearing the people and obeying their voice. But now bear, I beseech thee, my sin, and return with me that I may adore the Lord." But Samuel turned to go away; whereupon Saul clutched his mantle so tightly that it was rent. Samuel said to him: "The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to thy neighbour, who is better than thee."

Samuel at length consented to return with Saul that he might

honour him before the ancients of the people and before Israel. When Agag was brought before them, Samuel said to him: "As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women." He then took a sword, and hewed him in pieces. Samuel then departed to Ramatha, mourning for Saul, whom he never again visited (1 Kings xv.).

CHAPTER LXXI

DAVID IS ANOINTED KING, B.C. 1070

WHILE Samuel was lamenting the fall of Saul, God said to him: "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, whom I have rejected from reigning over Israel? Fill thy horn with oil, and come, that I may send thee to Isai the Bethlehemite; for I have provided Me a king among his sons." Samuel said: "How shall I go, for Saul will hear of it, and he will kill me?" The Lord said to him: "Thou shalt take with thee a calf of the herd, and thou shalt say: I am come to sacrifice to the Lord. And thou shalt call Isai to the sacrifice; and thou shalt anoint him whom I shall show thee."

Samuel obeyed; but when he came to Bethlehem, the ancients of the city wondered, and said to him: "Is thy coming hither peaceable?" He answered: "It is peaceable. I am come to offer sacrifice to the Lord." He then sanctified Isai and his sons, and invited them to his sacrifice. Now Isai had eight sons, seven of whom accompanied their father while David the youngest was absent tending the sheep.

When Samuel saw Eliab, the eldest son, a tall and comely youth, he thought surely this was the one whom the Lord had chosen. But the Lord said to him: "Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart." After that Isai presented his other sons in order, but with the same result. "Are all thy sons here?" asked Samuel. Learning that the youngest was in the fields tending his flocks, he bade Isai send for him.

Now when David, a youth ruddy and beautiful to behold, stood before them, the Lord said to Samuel: "Arise and anoint him, for this is he." From that day forward the Spirit of the Lord came upon David.

But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit troubled him, so that he became subject to fits of melancholy, anger, suspicion, and cruelty. His officers advised him to seek a man skilful in playing the harp, in order that, when the fits came upon him, his soul might be soothed by the calming effects of the music. David, who was a skilful player, was sent for, and so pleased was Saul with him that he not only appointed him to play before him, but made him his armour-bearer. Whenever the evil spirit took possession of Saul, David took his harp and played, and the king's feelings were soothed. But when there appeared no further need of his attendance, David went to look after his father's flocks (1 Kings xvi.).

CHAPTER LXXII
DAVID AND GOLIATH

Soon again we find the Philistines arrayed against Israel. The Philistines occupied one hill, and Saul and his men were drawn up on another hill over against them.

In the Philistine army was a man of gigantic stature, named Goliath, whose height was more than six cubits. On his head he wore a helmet of brass; his armour, too, was of brass, while his staff, which was as thick as a weaver's beam, had an iron head of great weight.

Day after day, for forty days, this monster came forth and called to the Israelites: "Choose out a man from among you, and let him come down to fight hand to hand. If he be able to kill me, we will be servants to you; but if I kill him, you shall serve us." But no man durst venture to give him battle.

Three of the sons of Isai were serving in Saul's army, and David was sent by his father to carry provisions to them, and to see how it fared with them. He arrived in the camp at the very time when Goliath appeared as usual before the Israelites with his boastful challenge.

David's soul was fired when he heard the words of the giant; and he said to those about him: "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" and he resolved to go himself against the giant.

His words were reported to Saul, who summoned him into his presence. David said to him: "Let no man's heart be dismayed in him. I thy servant will go and fight against the Philistine." He also told the king that he had already slain a lion and a bear that had come to devour his flocks. At first Saul opposed his wishes, but now hesitated no longer. He arrayed David in a coat of mail and a helmet of brass, and bade him go in the name of the Lord.

David then girded on his sword, and tried if he could walk in armour, but finding his motions impeded, he said to the king: "I cannot go thus, for I am not used to it." Then casting off the coat of mail, he took his staff, and fetched from the brook five smooth stones. These he put into his shepherd's scrip, and, with a sling in his hand, went forth to meet the giant.

When Goliath saw David coming towards him, he cast upon him a look of scorn, and asked: "Am I a dog that thou comest to me with a staff? Come to me, and I will give thy flesh to the birds of the air, and to the beasts of the earth." David replied: "Thou comest to me with a sword and a spear and a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts; and the Lord will deliver thee into my hand, and having slain thee, I will take away thy head from thee."

Goliath advanced to smite down the youth. David quickly stepped back a few paces, and fitted a stone to his sling; then whirling the sling round his head, he let fly the stone, which struck the

monster and felled him to the ground. Goliath was unable to rise; and David, running up, quickly drew the Philistine's own sword from its sheath, and cut off his head.

A mighty shout arose from all the Israelites. They immediately rushed forward to attack the Philistines, who fled in the wildest confusion pursued by their elated foe. Not till evening did the Israelites return to take possession of the Philistine camp (1 Kings xvii.).

CHAPTER LXXIII

FRIENDSHIP OF DAVID AND JONATHAN

WHEN the battle was over, Saul, who does not appear to have recognised David, sent for him, and from his own lips received the account of his simple shepherd's life, and learnt that he was the son of Isai.

Jonathan was present during the interview, and as he listened to David's artless story, he conceived so great an affection for him that he made a covenant of friendship with him, for he loved him as his own soul. To honour his friend he clothed him in his own garments, and presented him with his sword, his bow, and his girdle.

Now when the Israelites were returning from their victory over the Philistines, the women came out to meet them with timbrels in their hands, and singing: "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." The king was filled with anger and said to those around him: "They have given David ten thousand, and to me they have given but one thousand; what can he have more but the kingdom?" From that day forward he regarded David with an evil eye.

The very next day the evil spirit came upon Saul, and David was brought in to soothe him by playing upon the harp. Seized with a fit of anger as he regarded him, Saul hurled his spear with great force, thinking to nail him to the wall; but David, stepping quickly aside, avoided the intended blow, and fled from the king's presence.

Saul now tried to bring about his destruction in a more cunning way; for he feared David because the Lord was with him. In the hope that he would be killed, he put him at the head of a thousand men, and said to him: "Behold my elder daughter Merob; her will I give thee to wife. Only be a valiant man, and fight the battles of the Lord." Now Saul said within himself: "Let not *my* hand, but the hands of the Philistines be upon him." He then imposed one condition upon him which he hoped would prove fatal to him. He demanded of David as a dowry the spoils of a hundred Philistines.

With the men under his command David attacked and defeated the Philistine army, and with his own hand slew *two* hundred of the enemy. The tokens of his victory he laid at Saul's feet and claimed the promised reward.

In the meantime, feeling sure that David would be slain, Saul had given Merob in marriage to another, and now offered David his

younger daughter in her stead. David, who loved Michol, and had his affection returned, consented to the marriage, and became the king's son-in-law (1 Kings xviii.).

CHAPTER LXXIV

SAUL'S PERSECUTION OF DAVID

JONATHAN, finding that his father was still bent on David's destruction, secretly warned David of the peril to which he was exposed. "My father seeketh to kill thee," he said; "wherefore look to thyself, I beseech thee. In the morning thou shalt be hid in a secret place, and I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art; and I will speak to my father, and whatsoever I shall see, I will tell thee."

The next day Jonathan was walking with Saul near David's hiding-place, and said to him: "Sin not, O king, against thy servant David, whose works are good towards thee, and who is without fault." Saul was appeased, and swore: "As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain." David was again received into favour, and rendered the same services to Saul.

But David's further successes against the Philistines once more roused the jealousy of the king; and again, when David was playing before him on the harp, the king, in an outburst of passion, hurled his spear at him. David turned quickly aside and fled, and the spear was fixed quivering in the wall.

Saul now sent soldiers to watch David's house, with instructions to kill him as he came out in the morning. But Michol enabled him to escape in the middle of the night by letting him down by a rope from the window. She then took a goat's skin, and with it dressed up an image, which she so arranged in the bed that it resembled a man sleeping. In the morning she pretended to the soldiers the greatest alarm for her husband, who, she said, had become suddenly indisposed; and, in proof of her words, she pointed to the bed where lay the supposed David, unable to rise.

When the news was reported to Saul, the soldiers were commanded to bring David to him at once, even though he had to be carried on the bed. They entered the bedchamber, but on drawing near to the bed, they found not David, but the hair-decked statue. David fled to Samuel at Ramatha, from which place they went to Najoth, where they dwelt together.

Saul sent messengers to seize David and bring him back; but when they saw a company of prophets prophesying, and Samuel over them, the Spirit of God coming upon them, they too prophesied. Saul sent a second and a third party, and they likewise prophesied. At last, filled with rage, he resolved to go in person; but while he was on his journey, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he prophesied all the way to Najoth. There, laying aside his royal apparel, he cast himself down upon the ground before Samuel, and prophesied all that day and night. Hence arose the proverb: "What! is Saul too among the prophets?" (1 Kings xix.).

CHAPTER LXXV

PARTING OF DAVID AND JONATHAN

THINKING it no longer safe to remain at Najoth, David secretly fled to Jonathan at Gabaa, and in the ears of his friend poured out his bitter sorrow: "What have I done? What is my sin against thy father that he seeketh my life? Truly as the Lord liveth, there is but one step between me and death." Jonathan said to him: "God forbid, thou shalt not die; for my father will do nothing great or little without first telling me."

Then David said to Jonathan: "Behold to-morrow is the new moon, and I, according to custom, am wont to sit beside the king to eat. If thy father look and inquire for me, tell him that I have asked leave to go to Bethlehem. If he shall say: It is well; thy servant shall have peace; but if he be angry, know that his malice is come to its height."

Jonathan thereupon invited David into the field where David was to lie hid, and as they went along together he said to him: "If my father shall continue in malice against thee, I will discover it to thee, and will send thee away." They then solemnly renewed their covenant of friendship, and agreed upon the signal by which David was to know the mind of the king. "On the third day," said Jonathan, "thou wilt remain beside the stone that is called Ezel, and I will shoot three arrows near it, and will shoot as if I were exercising myself at a mark. If I shall say to my attendant: Fetch me the arrows; behold they are on this side of thee, take them up; thou shalt come to me because there is peace to thee. But if I shall speak thus to the boy: Behold the arrows are beyond thee; go in peace, for the Lord hath sent thee away."

When David failed to be present on the feast of the new moon, and Jonathan made excuses for him, he did but succeed in turning his father's wrath against himself. Saul snatched up a spear, and would have struck his son, had he not been restrained in his rash act. Jonathan, filled with grief, hastily left the room.

Early the next morning he went into the field in which David was hid, as if to exercise himself with the bow and arrow. David listened anxiously to catch Jonathan's words; but when he heard him call to the boy, "Behold the arrow is further beyond thee," he knew that he must fly for safety.

Waiting till Jonathan had dismissed his attendant, David came from his hiding-place, and fell down in tears at his feet. Then rising up, he embraced his friend, and kissing each other, they wept together, but David more bitterly. Jonathan said to him: "Go in peace; and let all stand that we have sworn, both of us, in the name of the Lord." David then went away, and Jonathan returned into the city (1 Kings xx.).

CHAPTER LXXVI

DAVID'S FLIGHT

DAVID betook himself first of all to Nobe, where the Tabernacle then stood. When the High Priest saw him coming alone, he expressed surprise that a man of David's rank should travel thus. David said that he was on a secret mission from the king, and that he had told his servants to meet him at a certain place. He informed him, too, that he had come without provisions of any kind, and besought the High Priest to supply him with food.

Achimelech answered that he had nothing but the sacred Loaves of Proposition, which had been taken from the Tabernacle to be replaced by fresh ones; yet, owing to the necessity of the case, he gave him of the holy bread, after assuring himself that he was defiled by no uncleanness. The High Priest also gave him the sword of Goliath, which was kept in the Tabernacle behind the ephod; and thus armed he fled into the land of the Philistines. Now Doeg, one of Saul's shepherds, was a witness of this scene.

David first went to Geth, in which city King Achis had his residence and from which Goliath had gone forth to battle against the Israelites. This bold step served to throw dust in the eyes of his pursuers. But finding his life was in danger from Achis, he sought refuge in a cave by the city of Odollam, where he was joined by his brethren and all his father's house, and by many who were in distress. In all they numbered 400. Having confided his parents to the care of the king of the Moabites, he fled with his followers into the forest of Haret, a little to the west of Jerusalem.

It was while David was in hiding here that Doeg went to Saul, and said: " I saw the son of Isai in Nobe with Achimelech, the High Priest, who consulted the Lord for him, and gave him food to eat." Filled with anger, Saul commanded the High Priest to be brought before him.

No excuse was availing on the part of the High Priest. Saul bade his servants slay Achimelech and the priests of the Lord. But no one moved to do his bidding. Then, casting his eyes upon Doeg, he bade him fall on the priests with his sword. Doeg obeyed; and on that day were slain eighty-five priests, each wearing his linen ephod.

Saul next sent to Nobe, the city of the priests, and put to the sword not only men and women, but helpless children. Only one of the sons of Achimelech—viz., Abiathar—escaped the cruel massacre. He fled to David and recounted to him the sad calamity that had overtaken his father and his father's house. David's heart was filled with grief at the sad tidings.

Word was now brought to David that the people of Ceila had been suddenly attacked by the Philistines. Falling unexpectedly upon the enemy, he utterly defeated them, and carried off their plunder besides a great number of cattle. He then established himself in

the town of Ceila. Saul, hearing this, thought it was now impossible for David to escape his hands.

News of Saul's intention reached David, and he asked Abiathar to consult the Lord in his regard. He was astounded when he learnt that the people of Ceila, whom he had so recently saved from the Philistines, were ready to deliver him up to the king.

David then withdrew with his followers, and took refuge in a forest in the desert of Ziph. Here he had his last interview with Jonathan. They once more renewed their covenant of friendship; and before they parted Jonathan said to his friend: "Fear not; for the hand of my father shall not find thee. Thou shalt reign over Israel, and I shall be next to thee; yea, and my father knoweth this." Then, taking an affectionate farewell, he returned home.

The Ziphites secretly informed Saul that David was hiding in their midst, and that if he would come they would deliver him into his hands. Again David fled, closely pursued by Saul. At one time David was on one side of a hill while Saul was tracking him on the other; from which circumstance the hill received the name of the *Rock of Division*. But Saul was forced to abandon the pursuit (1 Kings xxi.-xxiii.).

CHAPTER LXXVII

THE CAVE OF ENGADDI—DEATH OF SAMUEL

DAVID next withdrew into the district of Engaddi on the western shore of the Dead Sea, and here he was pursued by Saul, who had with him a body of 3,000 picked men.

On one occasion Saul left his attendants at a distance and actually entered the very cave in the dark recesses of which David and his men had taken refuge. David's servants said to him: "Behold the day of which the Lord said to thee: I will deliver thy enemy unto thee, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good in thy eyes." But David's thoughts were not on revenge. He crept noiselessly behind the king, and merely cut a piece out of the hem of his robe. Even for this small mark of disrespect to the Lord's anointed, his heart smote him, and he forbade his men to lay a hand upon the king.

Saul withdrew from the cave, but when he had got a short distance away, David came out of the cave and cried out: "My lord the king." Saul turned and beheld David, who bowed down before him, and showed him the piece that he had cut out of his garment as a proof that he had spared his life. "Why," he said, "dost thou hear the words of men who tell thee that David seeketh to hurt thee? Behold this day thy eyes have seen that the Lord hath delivered thee into my hands, and I spared thee; yet thou liest in wait for my life to take it away."

Deeply affected by David's act and words, Saul wept and said: "Is this thy voice, my son David? Thou art more just than I; for I have rewarded thy goodness with evil. For who, when he hath found his enemy, will let him go well away? The Lord reward

thee for what thou hast done to me this day. And now as I know that thou shalt surely be king of Israel, swear to me that thou wilt not destroy my seed after me." David swore to fulfil Saul's request, and Saul returned home; but David remained for a time in his rocky retreat.

About this time Samuel died at the ripe age of ninety-eight. He was buried at Ramatha, and Israel mourned for him as they had mourned for Moses and Aaron.

After Samuel's death, David moved into the desert of Pharan. At this time there dwelt in the neighbourhood a certain rich man named Nabal, who pastured his flocks on the slopes of Carmel. David not only refrained from injuring his flocks, but himself defended them against all intruders.

Now when David sent to ask Nabal some little return for the services he had rendered him, Nabal refused in the most insulting terms. "Servants," he said, "are multiplied nowadays who flee from their masters."

When this reply was brought to David, he bade every man gird on his sword; then leaving 200 men to guard the baggage, he went forward with the remainder, fully resolved on the destruction of Nabal and all his household.

But Abigail, Nabal's wife, a prudent and comely woman, in the meantime secretly got together 200 loaves, two vessels of wine, five sheep already dressed, and many other presents. These she placed upon asses, and sent them on with her servants, while she herself went out to meet David. She begged him not to bear in mind the words of Nabal (*folly*), who according to his name was a fool, and folly was with him. As for herself she knew nothing of David's request until it was told to her by one of her servants.

David said to her: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who sent thee this day to meet me; and blessed be thou who hast kept me to-day from coming to blood, and revenging me with my own hand." He gladly accepted her presents, and bade her return in peace to her house.

When Abigail returned home she found her husband feasting and overcome with wine. In the morning, when he was sober, and heard to what peril his selfish conduct had exposed him, he became as one stupefied by the sudden shock, and his heart seemed to die within him. Ten days later he died, unpitied and unwept. Shortly afterwards David married Abigail (1 Kings xxv., 36-42).

CHAPTER LXXVIII

DAVID SPARES SAUL A SECOND TIME

THE Ziphites came a second time to Saul and said: "Behold, David is hid in the hill of Hachila." Saul went out with 3,000 men to seize him.

Without a word to his men, David set out in the dead of night with but one attendant, his nephew Abisai, and succeeded in pene-

trating into Saul's camp. Advancing stealthily, they came to the tent in which the king lay asleep, with his spear fixed in the ground near his head, and Abner and his officers, also asleep, lying round about in a circle.

Abisai urged David to slay the king; but David, unwilling to raise his hand against the Lord's anointed, merely took the spear and the cup of cold water which were placed at the head of the royal couch. When David had retired with Abisai to a safe distance, he called out in a loud voice: "Abner, wilt thou not answer?" Abner replied: "Who art thou that criest, and disturbest the king?" David said: "Art thou a man, Abner, and who is like unto thee in Israel? Whence, then, hast thou not kept thy lord the king, for there came out one of the people to kill him? And where is the king's spear? where the cup of water that was at his head?"

Saul, roused from his slumbers, recognised David's voice, and called to him: "Is this thy voice, my son?" David answered: "It is my voice, my lord. Wherefore doth my lord persecute his servant? If the Lord stir thee up against me, let Him accept the sacrifice; but if the sons of men, they are accursed in the sight of the Lord who have cast me out this day." Saul said to him: "I have sinned: return, my son David, for I will no more do thee harm, because my life hath been precious in thy eyes this day." David answered: "Behold the king's spear. Let one of the king's servants come over and fetch it. The Lord hath delivered thee this day into my hands, and I would not put forth my hand against the Lord's anointed." Saul said to him: "Blessed art thou, my son David; and truly doing thou shalt do, and prevailing thou shalt prevail." Saul then went back to Gabaa, and David retired into the country of Geth.

Achis, the king, received David most favourably, and gave him for his abode the frontier town of Siceleg, which from that time remained in the possession of the kings of Juda.

About this time the Philistines resolved on a mighty attack against the Israelites, and Achis requested David to join him with his 600 men. David readily accepted the proposal, but the Philistine chiefs, doubtful of his sincerity, opposed the suggestion, and David returned with his followers to Siceleg.

On reaching Siceleg, after three days' absence, they found that the Amalecites had suddenly appeared before the city and burnt it to the ground, carrying with them as captives all the women and children. David's followers threw the blame on him and threatened to stone him to death. But his courage did not fail him. After ascertaining the Divine will, through Abiathar, he vigorously followed up the marauders.

A servant of one of the Amalecites, whom David found half-dead from hunger and exhaustion, told him where he would find the enemy, and offered to guide him to the spot. He was immediately supplied with food, and when his strength began to return, the pursuit was resumed. Before long David fell upon the unsuspecting

Amalecites, who were feasting and drinking in great disorder; and not only did he recover the women and children, but also all the booty that had been taken; and much spoil in addition fell into his hands (1 Kings xxvi.-xxx.).

CHAPTER LXXIX

THE WITCH OF ENDOR—SAUL'S DEATH, B.C. 1055

THE Philistines had encamped near Sunam on the hillside, while Saul had drawn up his army on the opposite slopes of Mount Gelboe. Saul consulted the Lord, but was vouchsafed no answer. He was on the point of giving way to despair when another idea occurred to him: he would have recourse to witchcraft.

Although he had banished all soothsayers from his kingdom, he learnt that, in one of the caverns at Endor, there dwelt a woman possessed of a divining spirit. Disguised, and with but two attendants, Saul set out by night to seek her dwelling.

Arrived at the cavern, they found the woman; and the king thus addressed her: "Bring me up him whom I shall tell thee." At first she hesitated, for she was afraid that knowledge of her doings might reach the king's ears. Reassured, however, by the king's promise, she asked whom he wished to be raised. Hardly had he mentioned the name Samuel, when lo! that instant, Samuel stood before her. The witch was filled with alarm, and cried out to the king: "Why hast thou deceived me, for thou art Saul?" He bade her fear not, but tell him what it was that she saw. From her description he understood that it was Samuel, and bowed down to the ground.

"Why," asked Samuel, "hast thou disturbed my rest, that I should be brought up?" Saul answered: "I am in great distress, for the Philistines fight against me, and God is departed from me, and would not hear me." Samuel said to him: "Why askest thou me, seeing that the Lord hath departed from thee, and is gone over to thy rival? He will rend thy kingdom out of thy hand, and will give it to David, because thou didst not obey the voice of the Lord. To-morrow thou and thy sons shall be with me!"

Saul fell prostrate upon the ground, overcome with fear and exhaustion, for he had not touched food all that day. The witch and the two servants had much difficulty in persuading him to eat something, but, being at length prevailed upon, he so far recovered his strength that he was able that same night to return to the army.

Next morning the battle commenced, but the Israelites, knowing that God was no longer with them, made only a feeble resistance. Saul's three sons fell, and the king himself was dangerously wounded by an arrow. He said to his armour-bearer: "Draw thy sword and kill me, lest these uncircumcised come and slay me, and mock at me." The man was horror-stricken and refused to obey, whereupon the king, pointing the sword to his own breast, fell upon it and died. Seeing what the king had done, the armour-bearer also ended his life by throwing himself on his sword.

When the Philistines came the next day to strip the slain, they found the bodies of Saul and his three sons lying dead on Mount Gelboe. They took away their armour, and cut off Saul's head, which they sent in triumph among all their people, but his body and those of his sons they hung on the wall of Bethsan. But when the people of Jabes-Galaad heard what had happened, they stealthily took down the bodies and buried them with respect (1 Kings xxviii.-xxxi.).

THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL

OTHERWISE CALLED

THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS

This Book contains the history of David to the end of the pestilence sent as a punishment for his numbering the people.

CHAPTER LXXX

RIVAL KINGDOM OF ISBOSETH

WHEN news of Saul's death was brought to David, he was filled with grief. A young Amalecite, thinking to win favour, stated that he himself, at the king's request, had run him through with his sword to prevent him from falling into the hands of the Philistines, and in proof of what he said he showed David the diadem and bracelet which Saul had been accustomed to wear. At sight of these David burst into tears, and said to the Amalecite: "Why didst thou not fear to put out thy hand to kill the Lord's anointed? Thy blood be upon thy own head, for thy own mouth hath spoken against thee." He then bade his servants cut down the man where he stood.

In a beautiful canticle David poured forth his sorrow for the death of Saul and Jonathan: "The illustrious of Israel are slain upon the mountains: how are the valiant fallen? Tell it not in Geth, publish it not in the streets of Ascalon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Ye mountains of Gelboe, let not dew nor rain come upon you, nor let there be in you fields of first-fruits; for there was cast away the shield of the valiant, the shield of Saul as though he had not been anointed with oil. Saul and Jonathan, lovely and comely in their life, even in death they are not divided: they were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions. I grieve for thee, my brother Jonathan, exceedingly beautiful. As the mother loveth her only son, so did I love thee" (2 Kings i. 19-27).

Directed by God, David now went up to Hebron with his trusted followers, and was anointed king of Juda. When he learnt how the people of Jabes-Galaad had honourably buried Saul and his sons, he sent this message to them: "Blessed be ye to the Lord, who have showed this mercy to your master Saul, and have buried him. I will also requite you for this good turn, because you have done this thing."

The other tribes, headed by Saul's general, Abner, proclaimed Isboseth, the eldest surviving son of Saul, king over the rest of the tribes of Israel; and the new king chose as his capital Mahanaim *The Camps*) on the east of the Jordan. Thus the nation, for seven

and a half years, was divided into two parties. Not for two years did the forces of the two kings come into collision; and then the power of Isboseth was greatly weakened, first by the defeat, and afterwards by the defection, of Abner.

On one occasion, before Abner went over to David, his forces had been defeated and put to flight. Abner himself escaped from the field closely pursued by Joab's brother Asael. Unable to outrun him, Abner twice entreated him to leave off the pursuit lest he might be forced to slay him. But Asael paid no heed to his words, whereupon Abner, with a back stroke of his spear, thrust him through the body, and he died on the spot. Later, Abner was treacherously murdered by Joab and Abisai in revenge for the death of their brother Asael.

David was much grieved for Abner's death, and called down an imprecation on Joab and his house; yet, so powerful was Joab that David did not venture to inflict that punishment upon him which his crime deserved.

Isboseth was murdered by two of his own captains, who, after stabbing him, cut off his head and carried it to David in the hope of receiving a handsome reward. David, however, had them put to death at once for their unnatural treachery.

David was now without a rival. Miphiboseth, indeed, the son of Jonathan, was still alive, but was too young to cause any anxiety, and was, moreover, lame (2 Kings i.-iv.).

CHAPTER LXXXI

DAVID KING OVER ALL ISRAEL, B.C. 1048

Now that Isboseth was dead, a deputation from all the tribes waited upon David to offer him the crown, after he had reigned upwards of seven years at Hebron as king of Juda. He was now anointed king over all Israel.

He began his reign by marching with an army to Jerusalem and there besieging the Jebusites, who still were in possession of Mount Sion. The citadel speedily fell, and this, along with the city, became the new capital—"The City of David."

As soon as David was free to turn his thoughts to more peaceful matters, he had the Ark of God brought from Cariathiarim. He called together a numerous assembly of priests and people to meet him there; and when the Ark had been placed on a new cart drawn by oxen, a solemn procession was formed, and started on its way with music and song and much rejoicing. The king himself and the whole multitude of the people went before the Ark, while in charge of it walked Abinadab's two sons, Oza and Ahio.

When the procession reached the threshing-floor of Nachon, one of the oxen became restive and began to kick, so that the Ark seemed to be in danger of falling. To prevent this, Oza stretched out his hand and took hold of the Ark, but God struck him dead for his rashness. He was not a priest, and yet touched the Ark.

David himself was struck with fear and stopped the procession; and instead of having the Ark carried into his own city, he left it in the house of a pious Levite named Obededom, where it remained three months.

Seeing that the Lord blessed Obededom and all his house on account of the Ark, David again made preparations for removing it to the royal city, to be placed in the new Tabernacle which he had erected on Mount Sion. Every time the Levites who carried the Ark had gone six paces, an ox and a ram were offered in sacrifice. Laying aside his royal robes, and clothed with a linen ephod, David, dancing and playing upon the harp, led the procession, which advanced amid shouts of joy and sound of trumpet till it reached Jerusalem.

The Ark was placed in the Tabernacle; and David blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts, and distributed to all the multitude of Israel a loaf of bread and a cake of fine flour together with a portion of the sacrifice.

He next went in to bless his own house; whereupon his wife Michol, the daughter of Saul, taunted him with having demeaned himself by dancing unbecomingly before all his subjects. David said to her: "Before the Lord I will both play and make myself meaner than I have done. I will be little in my own eyes, and thus I shall appear more glorious." As a punishment for her pride, Michol remained childless.

When David compared his own beautiful palace of cedar with the humble Tabernacle in which the Ark rested, he said to Nathan: "Dost thou not see that I dwell in a house of cedar; and the Ark of God is lodged in skins?" That same night God, by the mouth of Nathan, said to him: "When thy days shall be fulfilled, I will raise up thy seed after thee, and I will establish his kingdom. *He* shall build a house to My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever." God thus denied to David the privilege of erecting a temple in His honour, because he had made many wars and had shed much blood. On hearing the prophet's message, David humbly resigned himself to the Divine will (2 Kings v.-vii; 1 Par. xi.-xvii.).

In the words of the prophet Nathan, David saw more than temporal promises, and that they related to the Messias who was to spring from his race. From this time the Saviour of the world was looked for among the descendants of David.

CHAPTER LXXXII

DAVID'S FALL

DURING the contest between the families of David and Saul two High Priests were acknowledged in their respective districts, Sadoc of the family of Phinees, who, even during the reign of David, was permitted to officiate at Gabaon, and Abiathar, the son of Achimelech whom Saul slew. Some regard Sadoc as merely Abiathar's delegate at Gabaon.

Mindful of the covenant which he had made with Jonathan, David sent for Miphiboseth, Jonathan's son, and restored to him the lands of Saul. Moreover he treated him as one of his own sons.

At this time David was at war with the Ammonites. Joab was sent to lead an army into the lands of the Ammonites and to lay siege to Rabbath, but David remained at Jerusalem. One evening when the king, according to his custom, was walking on the roof of his palace, he beheld a woman of great beauty, named Bethsabee, the wife of his trusted officer Urias. Yielding to a wicked curiosity, David found out who she was, and knowing that her husband was absent with the army, he sent for her and committed adultery with her. Then to screen her from a shameful death and to conceal his own guilt, he wrote a letter to Joab bidding him expose Urias in the thickest part of the fight, from which there was no hope of his coming out alive.

Totally unconscious of the wrong that was being done him, Urias was placed where the fight was likely to be hottest, and was slain. Word of this was at once sent to David, who was apparently unconcerned over the terrible murder, and merely attributed what had happened to the fortune of war. But " this thing which David had done was displeasing to the Lord."

Bethsabee mourned for the death of her husband; but when the days of mourning were passed, she was married to David and bore him a son (2 Kings ix.-xi.).

CHAPTER LXXXIII

NATHAN'S PARABLE—DAVID'S REPENTANCE

For a whole year David continued blind to his sin and impenitent. Then God sent to him the prophet Nathan, who, in the parable of " The Rich Man and the Poor Man's Ewe-lamb," recalled him to a sense of his guilt: " There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. But the poor man had nothing at all but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished, and which had grown up in his house, together with his children, eating of his bread, and drinking of his cup, and sleeping in his bosom; and it was unto him as a daughter. And when a certain stranger was come to the rich man, he refused to take of his own sheep and oxen to make a feast for the stranger, but took the poor man's ewe lamb, which he killed and dressed."

Unable to restrain his anger, David exclaimed: "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this is a child of death. He shall restore the ewe fourfold, because he did this thing, and had no pity."

Then Nathan said to David: "Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord: I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee from the hand of Saul. I gave thee wives, and the house of Israel and Juda; and if these things be little, I shall add far greater things unto thee. Why, therefore, hast thou despised the word of the Lord

to do evil in My sight? Thou hast killed Urias with the sword of the children of Ammon, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife. Therefore, the sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised Me: I will raise up evil against thee out of thy own house."

David humbly acknowledged his sin, saying: "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan said to him: "The Lord hath taken away thy sin: thou shalt not die. Nevertheless, because thou hast given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, for this thing the child that is born to thee shall surely die."

The infant son of Bethsabee fell sick and its life was despaired of. David besought the Lord for the child, and for several days lay upon the ground fasting and weeping. On the seventh day the child died, but his attendants feared to tell him. Yet when he learnt that the child was dead, he rose up at once, washed himself and changed his apparel, and went to worship in the house of the Lord. He then came into his own house and ate. "While the child was yet alive," he said to his servants, "I fasted and wept for him; for I said: Who knoweth whether the Lord may not give him to me, and the child may live? But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Shall I be able to bring him back any more?"

Bethsabee gave birth to another son whom his parents called Solomon (*the pacific*); but Nathan called his name Jedidiah (*amiable to the Lord*), because the Lord loved him. He was destined to be the successor of David, and one from whom the Messias was to descend (2 Kings xii.).

CHAPTER LXXXIV

AMNON SLAIN BY ABSALOM—ABSALOM'S REVOLT

The king had a daughter of surpassing beauty named Thamar, and she was loved by her half-brother Amnon; and although the law forbade marriage between two so nearly related, Amnon determined that nothing should stand in the way of his affection. By a cunning device he contrived to carry out his unlawful purpose; but no sooner had he gained his wicked end than his love was turned into loathing; and overwhelmed with grief and shame Thamar was forcibly driven from his door. When her brother Absalom learnt the cause of her grief he bade her be comforted and return to his house, and watched for an opportunity of revenge.

For two years Amnon and Absalom exchanged not a word, but after that, at the time of sheep-shearing, Absalom prepared a great feast to which he invited all the king's sons, not excepting Amnon. When the feast was at its height and Amnon was overcome with wine, suddenly there rang out the one word, "Strike." Before any of the guests were aware of what was meant, Absalom's servants pierced the guilty Amnon to the heart. The rest of the king's sons mounted their mules and fled.

Absalom fled to his grandfather, Tholomai, king of Gessur, with

whom he remained three years. After a time, when the grief-stricken David had become more reconciled to the loss of his son, his feelings of resentment towards Absalom began to cool.

Anxious to bring about a complete reconciliation between father and son, Joab so far prevailed upon David that Absalom was allowed to return to Jerusalem on condition that he never again appeared in the king's presence.

Now Absalom was a youth tall and comely, and excelled all men in the beauty of his person. His hair was long and flowing, and there was no blemish in him. For two years after his return to Jerusalem from Gessur he was never once admitted into David's presence; but again Joab interceded for him with the king, who sent for him, and, in token of his complete forgiveness, gave him the kiss of peace.

The ungrateful Absalom soon began secretly to plot how he might dethrone his father. He gradually surrounded himself with a small bodyguard, had chariots and horsemen, and chose fifty men to run before him. Early in the morning he would take his station at the city gate; and when those who sought the king's judgment entered, he asked them from what city they came, and what was their cause. " O that they would make me judge over the land," he said, " that all that have business might come to me, and I might do them justice." And when any man approached to salute him, he took him by the hand and kissed him, and in this way won their hearts.

He next asked the king's leave to visit Hebron, saying that when he was in Gessur he had made this vow: " If the Lord shall bring me again into Jerusalem, I will offer sacrifice to the Lord in Hebron." To such a request David readily gave his assent.

There went with Absalom 200 men of Jerusalem, and he sent spies among all the tribes to warn those whom he had already gained over, that, when they heard the sound of a trumpet, they would know that he had already been proclaimed king at Hebron. Before David was aware of any plot against him, the conspiracy had come to a head (2 Kings xiii.-xv.).

CHAPTER LXXXV

DAVID FLIES BEFORE ABSALOM

When tidings of Absalom's rebellion reached David, alarmed for the safety of Jerusalem, he left the city with his faithful followers by the eastern gate, and the mournful band crossed the brook Cedron, taking the way which led to the desert.

Sadoc and Abiathar, and all the Levites with them, came with the Ark, but David bade them return, saying: " Carry back the Ark of God into the city. If I shall find grace in the sight of the Lord, He will bring me back again, and will show me both it and His Tabernacle. Let Him do that which is good before Him." Sadoc and Abiathar then went back with the Ark of God into the city.

David ascended Mount Olivet, barefooted and in tears, and

all that were with him wept. Hearing that Achitophel was among the conspirators, he besought God to render vain the wise counsels of Achitophel so that they might not be regarded by Absalom. Arrived at the top of Olivet, David turned to take a parting view of Jerusalem.

Here David was joined by his faithful counsellor Chusai, who came to him with his garments rent and with ashes upon his head, in token of deep mourning. David said to him: "Go back into the city, where thou shalt be as one of Absalom's party, and thus shalt thou defeat the counsels of Achitophel." Chusai did as David commanded.

As David began his descent on the opposite side of Olivet, he was met by Siba, the servant of the lame Miphiboseth, to whom he had entrusted the care of Jonathan's son's property. He came with two asses laden with loaves and fruit which he besought David to accept for himself and his followers.

David inquired of Siba how it fared with his master's son. To this Siba deceitfully replied that he had left Miphiboseth in Jerusalem expecting that now at length the time had come when Israel would restore him to the kingdom of his father. Without waiting to inquire into the truth of the story, David bestowed upon Siba all the possessions of his master.

When David was near to Bahurim, there came out a kinsman of the house of Saul, named Semei. Standing on the hillside, Semei called down curses on the head of the king and hurled stones at him. "Come out!" he cried, "come out, thou man of blood, and thou man of Belial! The Lord hath repaid thee for all the blood of the house of Saul, and He hath given thy kingdom into the hand of Absalom."

Abisai was furious, and said: "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king?" But David said to him: "Let him alone and restrain him not; perhaps the Lord will look on my affliction, and may render me good for the cursing of this day." As they went on their way Semei continued to follow them for some distance, cursing, and casting upon them earth and stones from the hillside (2 Kings xv., xvi.).

CHAPTER LXXXVI

DEATH OF ABSALOM

MEANTIME Absalom entered Jerusalem with all his followers, and was there joined by Chusai, whom he kept with him as one of his chief advisers.

Achitophel proposed that, while David and his followers were suffering from weariness and fatigue, instant pursuit should be set on foot. This counsel seemed good to Absalom, but before putting it into practice he sought Chusai's opinion. Chusai artfully replied: "The counsel that Achitophel hath given this time is not good. Thou knowest thy father and the men that are with him, that they are very valiant, and bitter in their mind. But rather let

all Israel be gathered to thee, and we shall come upon thy father, and shall cover him as the dew falleth upon the ground." This advice found favour with Absalom; and Achitophel was so discouraged that he at once departed to his own city, and, having put his house in order, hanged himself.

In haste Chusai sent messengers to Sadoc and Abiathar, advising them to inform the king at once of Absalom's intentions, and to urge him to pass quickly over the Jordan. Before sunrise the next morning David crossed the river and took up his position at Mahanaim. Absalom, with a powerful army, passed over the Jordan and encamped in the land of Galaad, not far from Mahanaim.

David proposed to march out at the head of his army, and was only prevented from doing so by the earnest wishes of his people. They said to him: "Thou shalt not go forth. If half of us should fall, they will not greatly care; for thou alone art accounted for ten thousand." He gave way to their wishes, but requested his captains to save the life of Absalom.

A fierce battle raged in the forest of Ephraim, and Absalom's followers were put to rout. To escape capture Absalom himself was forced to flee from the battle, mounted on a mule. His path lay through the forest, and as he hastened along, closely pursued by a party of David's men, his head was caught between the branches of an oak, and his flowing locks becoming entangled, he was dragged from the back of his mule and left suspended.

The first of David's men to see him in this plight announced the fact to Joab, who said to him: "Why didst thou not stab him to the ground, and I would have given thee ten sicles of silver and a belt?" The man answered: "If thou wouldst have paid down into my hands a thousand pieces of silver, I would not lay my hands on the king's son; for in my hearing the king charged thee and the other captains, saying: Save me the boy Absalom."

Regardless, however, of the king's express wish, Joab took three lances and thrust them into the heart of Absalom; then calling to his armour-bearers, he bade them finish the deed. The body was taken down and cast into a pit over which was piled a great heap of stones. Joab then recalled his men from the pursuit.

While David was sitting between the two gates of the city waiting for news of the battle, there came a messenger saying: "I bring good tidings, my lord the king." David asked: "Is the young man Absalom safe?" The messenger answered: "Let the enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against him unto evil, be as the young man is." David's countenance fell, and he was deeply moved; then going to the high chamber over the gate, he wept and murmured aloud: "My son Absalom; Absalom, my son. Would to God that I might die for thee, Absalom, my son; my son Absalom."

Joab hastened into David's presence and reproached him, saying: "Thou lovest them that hate thee; and thou hast shown this day that thou carest not for thy nobles, nor for thy servants. Now, therefore, arise, and go out and speak to thy servants, for I swear to

thee by the Lord that, if thou wilt not go forth, there will not tarry with thee so much as one this night." Casting off all external marks of grief, David again sat in the gate of the city, and the people came together and saluted him (2 Kings xvi.-xix.).

CHAPTER LXXXVII

DAVID'S RETURN TO JERUSALEM

In the meantime David requested Sadoc and Abiathar to go to the rulers of the tribe of Juda and say to them: "Why are you the last to bring back the king to his house? You are my brethren; you are my bone and my flesh."

David's message completely won the hearts of the men of Juda. They not only invited him to return, but went forth as far as Galgal to meet him and bring him back in triumph.

When Semei, who had cursed David in his adversity, saw him once again restored to the throne, he was eager to regain favour with him, and came out with a thousand men of the tribe of Benjamin to welcome him. Falling down before David, he said: "Impute not to me, my lord, the iniquity, nor remember the injuries of thy servant on the day that thou wentest out of Jerusalem, nor lay it up in thy heart." Abisai wished to slay Semei on the spot, but David rebuked him, and promised to spare Semei's life.

The next to meet David was Miphiboseth, the son of his friend Jonathan. David said to him: "Why camest not thou with me?" Miphiboseth answered: "My lord, my servant despised me. For I thy servant spoke to him to saddle me an ass, that I might get on and go with the king; for I thy servant am lame. Moreover he hath accused me to thee, my lord the king; but thou, my lord, art as an angel of God. Do what pleaseth thee." David listened to his story and said that, as he had not come along with him, he had given his possessions to Siba, but that Siba must now share the property with him. "Yea, let him take all," answered Miphiboseth, "for as much as my lord the king is returned peaceably to his house."

At the Jordan David took leave of Berzellai, the Galaadite, a good and rich man who had supplied his wants when he was at Mahanaim. David wished to take him with him to Jerusalem, but the old man answered: "I am this day fourscore years old. Are my senses quick to discern sweet and bitter? Or can meat and drink delight thy servant? Or can I hear any more the voice of singing-men and singing-women? Why should thy servant be a burden to my lord the king? Let me return and die in my own city, and be buried by the sepulchre of my father and my mother." David urged no further, but having got his consent for his son at any rate to accompany him, he blessed the good man, and bade him return in peace to his home.

Feelings of jealousy now began to rise in the breasts of some of the Israelites on account of Juda's having done what they considered ought to have been done by all. Seba, of the tribe of Benjamin, sounded the trumpet of revolt, and quickly drew to his side the dis-

contented tribes; but the men of Juda clung to the king and conducted him in safety to Jerusalem.

Abisai and his brother Joab were sent in pursuit of Seba and came up with him at Abela, a strong city into which he had withdrawn with his followers. Joab immediately laid siege to the place, but promised to depart if Seba were delivered up to him. Eager to come to peace, the people rose up against Seba, put him to death, and cast his head over the wall. Joab was faithful to his promise and immediately withdrew (2 Kings xix., xx.).

CHAPTER LXXXVIII

THE NUMBERING OF THE PEOPLE

With the suppression of Seba's revolt we enter on the last period of David's reign. Even yet unbroken peace was not to be his lot.

Israel's troubles within her own borders encouraged the Philistines to renew their efforts to regain some of their former power. As in the days of Goliath, there was in the Philistine camp a man of gigantic stature who had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot; and he taunted the Israelites and reproached their want of courage. Just as on a similar occasion David had gone out against Goliath, so now, one of David's nephews, named Jonathan, went forth to meet this new monster, and won great renown by slaying him.

David's power was now firmly established, and probably from vanity or a secret confidence in his own power, he was tempted to take a general census of his people. "And Satan rose up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel" (1 Par. xxi. 1). Even Joab resisted his design, but to no purpose; and Joab and the captains of the army proceeded to number the people.

After upwards of nine months they returned to Jerusalem with the report that of Israel there were 800,000 fighting-men, and of Juda 500,000. But no sooner was the king's vanity satisfied then he was struck with remorse, and confessed that he had sinned and done foolishly.

Even the very morning following Joab's return, God sent the prophet Gad to him to make known His anger, and to propose to him the choice of three punishments: seven years of famine, or to be compelled to flee for three months before his enemies, or for the land to suffer a three days' pestilence. David replied: "I am in a great strait; but it is better that I should fall into the hands of the Lord (for His mercies are many) than into the hands of men."

Then the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel, and there died 70,000 men. Overwhelmed with grief, David cried to the Lord: "It is I, I am he that have sinned; I have done wickedly; these are the sheep. Let thy hand, I beseech Thee, be turned against me and against my father's house." God was moved by his prayer, and the angel of death was commanded to stay his hand when near the threshing-floor of Areuna, where David was commanded to build an altar to the Lord. Here he offered holocausts and peace-offerings, and the plague was stayed from Israel (2 Kings xxi.-xxiv.; 1 Par. xxi.).

THE THIRD AND FOURTH BOOKS OF KINGS

These Books are called by the Fathers the Third and Fourth Books of Kings, but by the Hebrews the First and Second. They contain the history of Israel and Juda from the beginning of the reign of Solomon to the Babylonian Captivity.

THE TWO BOOKS OF PARALIPOMENON, OR CHRONICLES

These Books are called Paralipomenon (of things left out), *because they are a kind of supplement to the Books of Kings, and contain such events as were passed over in those Books.*

CHAPTER LXXXIX

SOLOMON ANOINTED—DAVID'S DEATH, B.C. 1015

THAT she might attend him in his old age and minister to all his wants, David married the beautiful Abisag, who nursed him and comforted him up to the time of his death.

Now David had promised to Bethsabee that he would leave his crown to Solomon, and by the advice of the prophet Nathan she went to the king and reminded him of the oath he had sworn, and at the same time told him of a plot on the part of his eldest surviving son, Adonias, to seize the crown for himself.

At once the king summoned Sadoc, Nathan, and Banaias the captain of the bodyguard, and bade them take Solomon to Gihon and there anoint him. As soon as the ceremony was over, the people saluted Solomon with shouts of joy, and conducted him from Gihon to Jerusalem to the sound of trumpets and cries of " God save King Solomon !"

Their shouts reached the ears of Joab, who, together with Abiathar, had also joined in the plot. He said to Adonias: " What meaneth this noise of the city in an uproar ?" But before he could receive an answer there burst into their presence a messenger with the tidings that Solomon had already been anointed king and that all the city was ringing with shouts of joy and acclamation. Adonias, alarmed for his own safety, fled for refuge to the altar, and refused to leave till he had received Solomon's promise of pardon and security. This was granted on Solomon's plighted word.

Knowing that his end was drawing near, David said to Solomon: " My son, it was my desire to have built a house to the name of the

Lord my God, but the word of the Lord came to me, saying: Thou hast shed much blood and fought many battles; thou canst not, therefore, build a house to My name, but a son that shall be born to thee shall be a most quiet man, he shall be called Peaceable (*Solomon*); and I will give peace and quietness to Israel all his days. He shall build a house to My name, and he shall be a son to Me; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. Now, then, my son, the Lord be with thee, and do thou prosper, and build the house to the Lord thy God. For then thou shalt be able to prosper if thou keep the commandments and judgments which the Lord commanded Moses to teach Israel."

Then, after he had committed to his care the materials which he had gathered together for the construction of the Temple, and the vast sums of money amassed for the same purpose, and after seeing him once more anointed in the presence of the people, David, the son of Isai, went the way of all flesh, and was buried in his own city. He was seventy years of age at the time of his death (3 Kings i., ii.; 1 Par. xxii., xxiii.).

In his life David prefigured our Lord in a wonderful manner: in his birth at Bethlehem, and in his persecutions and subsequent glory. Accompanied by a few faithful followers, and barefooted and in tears, David crossed the brook Cedron to make the ascent of Mount Olivet; our Saviour, with His holy Mother and a few faithful disciples, on the night of His betrayal, made the same journey. In his affliction David was insulted by Semei, but forbade those who surrounded him to return injury for injury; our Saviour, too, as He hung upon the Cross, was derided and insulted by the Jews, but their insults served only to move His loving sympathy: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." David returned triumphant and received the homage of his subjects; Christ rose triumphant from the tomb to receive the homage of the whole world.

The Psalms, which were in a great part composed by David, bear, many of them, a Messianic character. In Psalm xxi. we have a vivid description of Christ's sufferings in the words: "They have dug My hands and feet, they have numbered all My bones." In Psalm lxviii. we have the words: "I looked for one that would comfort Me, and I found none. And they gave Me gall for My food, and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." Again in Psalm xxi. we find these words: "O God, My God, look upon Me: Why hast Thou forsaken Me? . . . They parted My garments amongst them; and upon My vesture they cast lots."

In Psalm cix. we have a picture of the triumph and exaltation of our Saviour; in others we have the Resurrection foretold, and the call of the Gentiles. In Psalm xxiii. David sees the brightness of Christ's Ascension: "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye

lifted up, O eternal gates, and the King of glory shall enter in;" and in Psalm cix. His everlasting priesthood: "Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech."

CHAPTER XC

SOLOMON SOLE KING OVER ISRAEL

Solomon loved the Lord, and walked in the precepts of his father David. As soon as his throne was firmly established, he assembled the ancients of Israel, and going to Gabaon, he there offered in sacrifice a thousand victims.

The following night the Lord came to him and said: "Ask what thou wilt that I should give thee." Solomon answered: "O Lord God, Thou hast made Thy servant king instead of David, my father. I am but a child, and know not how to go out and come in; give, therefore, to Thy servant an understanding heart to judge this people, and discern good and evil. For who shall be able to judge this people, which is so numerous?"

God was pleased with his request and said to him: "Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, nor riches, nor the lives of thy enemies, behold I have done for thee according to thy words, and have given thee a wise and understanding heart, insomuch that there hath been no one like unto thee before, nor shall arise after thee. Yea, and the things also which thou didst not ask I have given unto thee, namely, riches and glory; so that no king hath ever been like unto thee before."

When Solomon returned from Gabaon to Jerusalem, he offered holocausts and sacrificed peace-offerings, and made a great feast for all his servants.

He soon had occasion to display his wisdom. Two women presented themselves before him to have a dispute settled. One of them said to him: "This woman and I dwell together in the same house, and have each had a child; but her child died in the night, for in her sleep she overlaid it. Then rising in the dead of night, she took my child from my side while I was asleep, and laid it in her bosom, leaving her dead son in my arms. Now when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold it was dead; but regarding it more closely, I found it was not mine." Hereupon the other woman exclaimed: "It is not as thou sayest, but thy child is dead, and mine is alive." "No," said the other, "on the contrary, it is thou that liest, for my child liveth, and thine is dead." And thus they continued to dispute before the king.

Solomon said to one of his attendants: "Bring me a sword." When this was done, he gave orders for the living child to be divided in two, and for each woman to be given a half.

But she who was the real mother cried out in alarm: "I beseech thee, my lord, give her the child alive, and do not kill it." The other said: "Let it be neither thine nor mine, but divide it." The

king answered: "Give the child to her that cried out to save it, for she is the mother thereof."

All Israel heard of the judgment, and feared the king, seeing that the wisdom of God was in him. His fame reached to kingdoms the most remote, and there came men of all nations to hear his wisdom.

Among those who came to congratulate him were the ambassadors of Hiram, king of Tyre. Solomon set before them his intention of erecting a Temple to the name of the Lord, and bade them make this request to their master: "Give orders that thy servants cut down cedar-trees out of Libanus, and let thy servants be with my servants; for thou knowest how there is not among my people a man that has skill to hew wood like the Sidonians."

Hiram was rejoiced at the message, and replied: "I will do all thy desire concerning cedar-trees and fir-trees, and thou shalt allow me necessaries to furnish food for my household."

Solomon gladly complied with this condition, and sent 30,000 men to Mount Libanus. In addition to these, 70,000 were employed as porters, and 80,000 to hew and prepare stone in the quarries, while other 3,600 were made overseers, so that the number engaged reached a total of 183,600 men (3 Kings iii.-v.; 2 Par. i., ii.).

CHAPTER XCI

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE: ITS DEDICATION, B.C. 1004

After upwards of three years' preparation the building of the Temple was begun. So exactly had the materials been prepared that, as the huge structure rose up, no sound of hammer or of axe, or of any iron tool, was heard; but there, on the very spot upon Mount Moria which David had chosen, "like some tall palm the noiseless fabric grew." It was founded on a rock, and was an emblem of the perpetual existence of the true religion which has continued from the beginning of the world.

The Temple itself was built on the model of the Tabernacle, but in most of its dimensions was twice the size. It was built of stone, and consisted of three parts—the *Porch*, the *Holy Place*, and the *Holy of Holies*.

The *Porch* extended the full width of the building. Either within it, or supporting it in front, were two great brazen pillars, the one called Jachin, and the other Booz.

The *Holy Place* was lined within with richly carved cedar overlaid with gold, so that no stonework was visible. In it stood the *Altar of Incense*, the *Golden Table* upon which the Loaves of Proposition were to be set, and the *Golden Candlesticks*.

The *Holy of Holies* stood at the western end of the building, and was separated from the Holy Place by folding-doors of olive-wood, beautifully carved and overlaid with gold. Before the entrance hung a sumptuous veil embroidered in violet, purple, and scarlet, with figures of cherubims wrought in. In the midst of the Holy of Holies rested the Ark of the Covenant, overshadowed

by two colossal cherubims made of olive-wood and overlaid with gold. These stood facing each other with wings extended, so that one wing of each met over the Ark, while the other stretched to the wall of the Temple.

In the *Court of the Priests* was the *Altar of Holocausts*, and the great *Brazen Laver* for the ablution of the priests. In addition to the great Laver were ten smaller ones which served for the ablution of the burnt-offerings. Outside the Court of the Priests was the *Court of the Israelites*, where the people assembled for prayer. The third, or outermost court, was afterwards known as the *Court of the Gentiles*.

At length, after seven years, the Temple was completed, and everything was put in order for the dedication. The Ark was brought in solemn procession from the City of David to the abode prepared for it. Solomon himself walked before the Ark, which was carried into the Holy of Holies, and set down under the wings of the cherubims.

As the priests retired from the Holy Place (or Sanctuary), the Levites and the singing-men began to play upon their cymbals and psalteries and harps, while at the same time a hundred and twenty priests sounded their trumpets. At the very moment when the voices of the singers were raised in those words of praise, "Give glory to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever," so dense a cloud appeared in the Temple that the priests could not go on with their services, "for the glory of the Lord had filled the House of God." Then was heard the voice of Solomon saying: "The Lord promised that He would dwell in a cloud, but I have built a house to His name, that He might dwell there for ever."

Solomon next turned his face towards the people, and from the brazen throne which he had set up in the midst of the Temple, he blessed them. Then kneeling down and lifting up his hands towards heaven, he prayed aloud: "O Lord God of Israel, there is no god like Thee in heaven nor in earth. Is it credible that God should dwell with men on earth? If heaven and the heaven of heavens do not contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built. But to this end only is it made, that Thou mayest regard the prayer of Thy servant and his supplication. Whosoever shall pray in this place, hear Thou from Thy dwelling-place, that is, from heaven, and show mercy. If Thy people be overcome by their enemies (for they will sin against Thee), and being converted shall do penance, and call upon Thy name, and pray to Thee in this place, then hear Thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of Thy people Israel, and bring them back into the land which Thou gavest them and their fathers. If there fall no rain by reason of the sins of the people, and they shall pray to Thee in this place, and confess to Thy name, and be converted from their sins when Thou dost afflict them, then hear Thou from heaven, O Lord, and forgive Thy servants, and give rain to the land which Thou hast given to Thy people to possess. If the stranger also, who is not of Thy people Israel, come from a far

country for the sake of Thy great name, and adore in this place, hear Thou from heaven, and do all that which that stranger shall call upon Thee for, that all the people of the earth may know Thy name and may fear Thee. And if Thy people sin against Thee (for there is no man that sinneth not), and Thou deliver them up to their enemies, and they lead them away captive, and if they be converted in their heart in the land to which they were led captive, and do penance, and pray to Thee, *and adore Thee towards the way of their own land, and the house which I have built to Thy name,* then hear Thou from heaven their prayers, and forgive Thy people."

No sooner had Solomon concluded his prayer than fire came down from heaven and consumed the holocausts and the victims; and the majesty of the Lord filled the Temple. All the assembly fell down with their faces to the ground, and adored and praised the Lord, "because He is good, and His mercy endureth for ever." The feast of the dedication was continued for fourteen days, after which the people were dismissed to their houses, joyful and glad for the good that the Lord had done to David, and to Solomon, and to all Israel His people (3 Kings vi.-viii.; 2 Par. v.-vii.).

CHAPTER XCII

SOLOMON'S GREATNESS

Solomon next raised for himself a palace near the Temple. This consisted of a number of magnificent buildings, such as the *House of the Forest of Libanus,* in which were hung 200 shields of the purest gold; the *Porch of the Throne,* wherein was the judgment-seat; and the *Porch of Pillars,* a court surrounded with pillars and galleries in front of the palace proper. Adjoining the Porch of the Throne was erected a palace for his queen, Pharao's daughter, for the king said: "My wife shall not dwell in the house of David, for it was sanctified, because the Ark of the Lord came into it."

When Solomon's works were completed, the Lord appeared to him a second time, and told him that his prayer had been accepted. "I have sanctified," He said, "this Temple which thou hast built to put My name there for ever; and My eyes and My heart shall be there always. And if thou wilt walk before Me as thy father walked, in simplicity of heart and uprightness, and wilt do all that I have commanded thee, I will establish the throne of thy kingdom over Israel for ever. But if you and your children shall turn away from following Me, and will not keep My commandments and My ceremonies, but will go and worship strange gods, I will take away Israel from the face of the land which I have given them, and the Temple which I have sanctified to My name I will cast out of My sight, and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people."

Solomon now turned his attention to other great works. He strengthened the walls of Jerusalem, and built and fortified many important cities to guard the approaches of his kingdom. Palmyra, the magnificent ruins of which are still to be seen in the midst of a

vast desert, was built to protect his eastern caravans passing between Jerusalem and the Euphrates. He fitted out vessels which sailed to more distant shores, and returned with the costly products of far-off lands.

His fame brought many eminent visitors from all parts of the world to hear the words of wisdom that fell from his lips. Of these, the most distinguished was the Queen of Saba (*Sheba*), a country lying on the south-eastern shore of the Red Sea. Bearing costly presents, and attended by a large retinue, she set out for Jerusalem to try Solomon with hard questions. When she saw the magnificence of his court and heard his wisdom, she was overwhelmed with astonishment, and said to him: "Now I have proved that scarce one-half of thy wisdom has been told me. Happy are thy men, and happy are thy servants who stand always before thee, and hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God who hath set thee upon the throne of Israel." When she left Jerusalem for her own country she departed laden with rich gifts from the king.

Even the vessels in use at the king's table were of gold, and his throne was of ivory and gold. In riches and wisdom he surpassed all other kings and rulers. Whenever he moved through the city, he was attended by gorgeous trains of chariots and horsemen; and we read that he made silver to be as plentiful in Jerusalem as the stones (3 Kings vii.-x.; 2 Par. viii., ix.).

CHAPTER XCIII

DOWNFALL AND LAST DAYS OF SOLOMON

NOTHING could be more beautiful than the beginning of Solomon's reign, nothing more terrible than the latter part of it, ending as it did in excess and idolatry.

In addition to his Egyptian wife he had taken wives from the Moabites, the Edomites, the Sidonians, and the Hethites—those heathen peoples with whom God had expressly forbidden the Hebrew either to marry or to give in marriage. In his old age these women turned away his heart from following the Lord, and caused him to go after strange gods, and to offer sacrifice and incense to their idols. He even built a temple to Chamos and another to Moloch, while each of the gods of his pagan wives was worshipped according to its own rites and ceremonies.

God now spoke to Solomon a third time, saying: "Because thou hast done this, and hast not kept My covenant and My precepts, I will divide and rend thy kingdom, and give it to thy servant. Nevertheless, in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake, but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Neither will I take away the whole kingdom; but I will give one tribe to thy son, for the sake of David My servant, and Jerusalem, which I have chosen."

Enemies soon began to disturb his peaceful reign; but the greatest danger of all was to come from one of his own servants. This was Jeroboam, the son of Nabal, of the tribe of Ephraim. Employed

by Solomon as an overseer of his works, he had heard the people's complaints regarding the heavy taxes which the king's lavish expenditure had brought upon them; and taking advantage of their discontent he sowed seeds of rebellion which were to spring up and bear much fruit.

One day when Jeroboam had left the city alone, he was met by the prophet Ahias, clad in a new garment. Taking the new cloak from his shoulders, the prophet tore it into twelve parts, ten of which he gave to Jeroboam, saying: "Take to thee ten pieces; for thus saith the Lord: Behold I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give thee ten tribes. But one tribe shall remain to him for the sake of My servant David and Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen. Yet will I make him prince all the days of his life, but I will take away the kingdom out of his son's hands. If, then, thou wilt do what is right before Me, I will be with thee, and will build thee up a faithful house as I built a house for David."

Word of what had taken place coming to Solomon's ears, he sought the life of Jeroboam; but the latter fled into Egypt, where he remained till Solomon's death. Solomon, after a reign of forty years, slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. He died in the fifty-eighth year of his age (3 Kings xi.).

Solomon and his kingdom, with its capital, Jerusalem, were figures of Christ triumphant and glorious, and of His Church. Our Saviour now sits on the throne of His Father in the Heavenly Jerusalem, where, after His victory over sin and death, He will reign in peace for all eternity.

PART VI

FROM THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM ON THE DEATH OF SOLOMON TO THE END OF THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

B.C. 975 TO B.C. 536

CHAPTER XCIV

KINGDOMS OF JUDA AND ISRAEL, B.C. 975.

AFTER the death of Solomon all Israel came together to acknowledge his son Roboam as their king; but before recognising his claim to the crown, they demanded an abatement of the taxes and impositions laid upon them by his father.

Roboam asked for three days' time in which to consider their petition, and promised that he would then make known his decision. He first sought the opinion of the old counsellors of his father, who said to him: "If thou wilt yield to this people to-day, and condescend to them, and grant their petition, and wilt speak gentle words to them, they will be thy servants always."

Not satisfied with this advice, he next consulted the younger men who had been brought up with him. They said to him: "Thus shalt thou speak to the people: My little finger is thicker than the back of my father. Now, my father put a heavy yoke upon you, but I will add to it; he beat you with whips, but I will beat you with scorpions."

Their words pleased Roboam; and when on the third day all were assembled to hear his decision, he answered as the young men had counselled him. His words filled the people with indignation; and when they found that he would not hearken to their just demands, they cried out: "What portion have we in David? or what inheritance in the son of Isai? Go home to thy dwellings, O Israel; now, David, look to thy own house." Ten tribes thereupon forsook Roboam never to return to him. They chose Jeroboam, who had recently returned from Egypt, as their king, and thus formed the new kingdom of Israel. To Roboam, as head of the tribe of Juda, there remained but his own tribe and the one tribe of Benjamin; and of these two tribes was composed the kingdom of Juda, over which the descendants of Solomon continued to reign.

Roboam raised an army with which to compel the submission of the rebel tribes; but the word of the Lord came to the prophet Semeias, bidding him say to the king; "You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren, the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me." Roboam obeyed without demur.

Additional strength was given to the cause of Roboam from the many who came out of the tribes of Israel to Jerusalem to sacrifice their victims before the Lord; and priests and Levites, too, flocked to Juda from all parts.

As his capital, Jeroboam rebuilt and strengthened Sichem, on Mount Ephraim; he also fortified Phanuel, and thus secured both sides of the Jordan (3 Kings xii.; 2 Par. x., xi.).

CHAPTER XCV

ISRAEL—REIGN OF JEROBOAM I

FEARING that, if his people went to Jerusalem to worship God and to celebrate the religious festivals, they might repent and return to their lawful king, Jeroboam, in imitation of the Egyptians, made two golden calves, and built temples to them in Bethel and Dan, the extreme ends of his kingdom. He said to the people: "Go ye no more to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt." He also erected many other temples in the high places, and chose priests to offer sacrifice to his idols.

On a certain festival day, Jeroboam went up to Bethel, and while he was there offering incense in person, behold there came a man of God out of Juda, and exclaimed: "O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord: Behold a child shall be born to the house of David, Josias by name, and he shall immolate upon thee the priests of the high places who now burn incense upon thee, and he shall burn men's bones upon thee. Moreover, this shall be a sign that the Lord hath spoken: Behold the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out."

Filled with anger, the king stretched forth his hand towards the man of God, exclaiming: "Lay hold on him." But in a moment his hand became withered so that he could not draw it back. The altar, moreover, was rent, and ashes were poured out from it, according to the sign which the man of God had given.

In alarm, Jeroboam besought the prophet to pray for him, and his hand was restored at the prayer of the man of God. He then said to the prophet: "Come home with me to dine, and I will make thee presents." But the man of God answered: "I will not go with thee, nor eat bread, nor drink water in this place, for so it was enjoined me by the word of the Lord, who also commanded me not to return the same way by which I came here." The prophet then took his leave and set out for home.

Now there came out to him a certain old prophet of Bethel, who said: "I, too, am a prophet like unto thee, and an angel spoke to me, bidding me bring thee back with me into my house that thou mayest eat bread and drink water."

Deceived by these words, the man of God returned, and, as they sat together at table, the word of the Lord came to the old prophet, and he prophesied, saying: "Thus saith the Lord: Because thou hast not been obedient to the Lord, and hast returned and eaten and

drunk in the place wherein He commanded thee not to do so, thy dead body shall not be brought into the sepulchre of thy fathers."

Seated on his ass, he was going on his journey when a lion sprang upon him and killed him, but did not injure the ass. Soon afterwards some men, passing along that way, discovered the body lying in the road, with the lion and the ass standing beside it, and they reported in Bethel what they had seen. The old prophet hastened to the spot, and had the body conveyed back to the city, where he reverently buried it in his own sepulchre. He then said to his sons: "When I am dead, bury me in the same sepulchre; for assuredly the word shall come to pass which he hath foretold against the altar that is in Bethel, and against all the temples of the high places."

About this time, Abia, son of Jeroboam, fell sick, and the father, alarmed for the child's safety, said to the mother: "Arise, and change thy dress, that thou be not known as the wife of Jeroboam, and go to Silo, to Ahias, the prophet who told me that I should reign over this people. He will tell thee what will become of the child."

No sooner had she set foot on the threshold of the prophet's house than he called out to her: "Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why dost thou feign to be another? But I am sent to thee with heavy tidings." He then recounted to her all the evils that were to befall the family of Jeroboam; that for his sins his house should be cut off, that the child should die as she entered the city on her return, and that he alone, of all Jeroboam's family, should be laid in a sepulchre. The child died as the prophet had foretold, and all Israel mourned for him.

After an inglorious reign of twenty-two years, Jeroboam died and was succeeded by his son Nadab. A short while before his death he had suffered a terrible defeat at the hands of Abia, king of Juda (3 Kings xii.-xiv.).

CHAPTER XCVI

JUDA—REIGNS OF ROBOAM, ABIA, AND ASA

DURING the first three years of his reign ROBOAM walked in the footsteps of David, and God prospered him; but soon there came a change. He and his people fell into the grossest idolatry and abandoned themselves to the most abominable vices.

To punish their wickedness, God made use of Sesac, king of Egypt. Roboam was driven to conclude a humiliating peace by surrendering to Sesac the enormous treasures of the Temple amassed by Solomon, as well as the costly adornments of the royal palace, including the gold shields. He died after a reign of seventeen years, and left his throne to Abia.

The only great event recorded of ABIA is his victory over Jeroboam, spoken of in the preceding chapter. "His heart was not perfect with the Lord his God." His reign lasted but three years.

ASA, son of Abia, ruled over Juda forty-one years. He was a pious king, and did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.

He began his reign by destroying the idolatrous altars which had been erected in the high places, by breaking the statues, and cutting down the groves. Some of the high places he did not take away, but only such as had been dedicated to the worship of idols or strange gods. The treasures of the Temple plundered by Sesac he renewed, and all the things which his father had vowed he himself carried out.

The first ten years of Asa's reign were years of peace, a peace that was first disturbed by Zara the Ethiopian. God heard Asa's prayer for help and gave him an easy victory over his enemy. As he and his army returned, laden with spoil, to Jerusalem, they were met by the prophet Azarias, who thus addressed them: "The Lord is with you, because you have been with Him. If you seek Him, you shall find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. And many days shall pass in Israel without the true God, and without a priest and a teacher, and without the law. And when in their distress they shall return to the Lord, and shall seek Him, they shall find Him. Do you therefore take courage, and let not your hands be weakened, for there shall be a reward for your work."

Asa now sought out and destroyed every idol that still remained in his kingdom and in the cities which he had taken. He next assembled all Juda and Benjamin, and the strangers with them, besides many from the other tribes. Solemn sacrifices were offered in Jerusalem, and the covenant was confirmed that they should seek the Lord, the God of their fathers, with all their heart. Then, with a loud voice, with joyful shouting and with sound of trumpets and of cornets, all solemnly swore to observe the promise they had thus renewed.

Asa, however, did not persevere in his piety, and was rebuked by the prophet Hanani for placing his confidence in the king of Syria rather than in the Lord. Attacked by Baasa, king of Israel, he brought the treasures of gold and silver out of the Temple that with them he might buy over to his assistance Benadad, the heathen king of Damascus. Hanani, at the command of God, came to him and told him that he had done foolishly, and that henceforth, for his want of confidence in God, wars should rise against him. Angered by the prophet's boldness, Asa cast him into prison, and put to death many of his subjects, probably because they had sided with the prophet.

In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa fell a prey to a severe disease, which caused his death two years later. He was succeeded by his son Josaphat (3 Kings xiv., xv.; 2 Par. xii.-xvi.).

CHAPTER XCVII

ISRAEL—REIGNS FROM NADAB TO ACHAB

NADAB, the son of Jeroboam, reigned but two years. He met a violent death, being slain by his own general, BAASA, who usurped the crown of Israel and put to death the rest of Nadab's family.

The Lord made known to Baasa, by the mouth of the prophet

Jehu, that for his crimes his own family, like that of Jeroboam, should be destroyed. He died after an inglorious reign of twenty-four years. ELA, his son, reigned but two years.

While overcome with drink in the house of the governor of Thersa, Ela was slain by ZAMBRI, a captain in his army, who had himself proclaimed king. Zambri's short reign lasted only seven days. Having put an end to his own life, he was succeeded by one of his generals, AMRI, whom the soldiers elected as their king. Amri built the city of Samaria as the seat of his government. He married his son and successor Achab to Jezabel, the daughter of the king of Tyre and Sidon, and reigned in all twelve years (3 Kings xv., xvi.).

CHAPTER XCVIII

ISRAEL—REIGN OF ACHAB

THE PROPHET ELIAS.

ACHAB, the son of Amri, was still more wicked than his father. It was not enough for him to imitate the crimes of Jeroboam; he married, as we have seen, the wicked Jezabel, and even built an altar and a temple to Baal in Samaria.

The prophet Elias presented himself before him and said: "As the Lord liveth, the God of Israel in whose sight I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to the words of my mouth." Directed by God, Elias took up his abode by the torrent Carith, and every night and morning he was fed by ravens, which brought him bread and flesh to eat, but his thirst he quenched from the waters of the torrent.

After some time the torrent dried up, and then God commanded him to go to Sarepta, a town of the Sidonians, where a widow would supply his wants. As he drew near to the town, he saw a woman gathering sticks, and calling to her he asked for a little water to drink. She turned to fetch it, when he called to her a second time, saying: "Bring me also a morsel of bread in thy hand." She answered: "As the Lord liveth, I have no bread, but only a handful of meal in a pot, and a little oil in a cruse. Behold I am gathering sticks that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die." Elias said to her: "Fear not, but go and do as thou hast said: But first make for me of the same meal a little hearth cake, and bring it to me; and afterwards make one for thyself and thy son. The pot of meal shall not waste, nor the cruse of oil be diminished, until the day wherein the Lord will give rain upon the face of the earth." She believed his words and acted as he told her; and God rewarded her faith according to the promise of the prophet.

Shortly after this the widow's son fell sick and died. The unhappy mother poured out her grief before Elias, who, touched with sorrow for her distress, raised the dead child in his arms, and, carrying it into the upper chamber, laid it upon his own bed. Then, stretching himself three times over the corpse, he thus besought the Lord.

" O Lord, my God, let the soul of this child, I beseech Thee, return into his body." The child revived, and Elias returned him to his mother with the words: " Behold thy son liveth." The woman said to him: " Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and the word of the Lord in thy mouth is true " (3 Kings xvi., xvii.).

CHAPTER XCIX

ISRAEL—REIGN OF ACHAB (Continued)

The Prophet Elias.

In the third year of the famine the word of the Lord again came to Elias, this time bidding him return to Achab, for rain was soon to fall upon the parched earth. Previous to this, Jezabel had put to death, as she supposed, all the prophets of the true God that were to be found in Israel; but a hundred of these holy men had been secretly warned by a God-fearing man named Abdias, the governor of Achab's house, and by him had been concealed in caves, where, unknown to the king's officers, he had them daily supplied with food. One day Achab called Abdias to him and said: " Go into the land unto all the fountains of water, and go into all valleys to seek for grass, and save the horses and mules that the beasts may not utterly perish."

As Abdias went to do the king's bidding, he was met by Elias, who was already on his way to the court of Achab as the bearer of God's message to the king. Abdias recognised the prophet at once, and, reverently saluting him, asked: " Art thou my lord Elias?" The prophet answered: " I am. Go and tell thy master: Elias is here." " What have I sinned," said Abdias, " that thou wouldst deliver me thy servant into the hand of Achab that he should kill me? There is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee. When I am gone from thee, the Spirit of the Lord will carry thee into a place that I know not; and I shall go in and tell Achab, and he not finding thee will kill me." Elias said to him: " As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whose face I stand, this day I will show myself unto him."

Abdias carried the message to Achab, who immediately set out in person to meet Elias, and asked him: " Art thou he that troublest Israel?" Elias answered: " I have not troubled Israel; it is thou and thy father's house who have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and have followed Baal. Nevertheless send now, and gather unto me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, who eat at Jezabel's table." Achab consented; and at the appointed time all were assembled on Carmel to see what Elias would do.

Standing before the multitude, Elias spoke thus: " I, a prophet of the Lord, stand alone, but the prophets of Baal are four hundred and fifty men. Let two bullocks be given us; let them choose one for themselves, and having cut it in pieces, let them lay it upon wood,

but put no fire under; and I will do the same with the other bullock. Call ye on the names of your gods, and I will call upon the name of my Lord; and the God that shall answer by fire, let Him be God." And all the people answering said: " A very good proposal."

Then Elias said to the prophets of Baal: " Choose you one bullock, and dress it first, because you are many; and call on the names of your gods, but put no fire under." And they took the bullock which he gave them, and dressed it. And they called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying: " O Baal, hear us." But there came no response; and they leapt over the altar that they had made.

When it was now midday, Elias went up and said to them: " Cry with a louder voice; for he is a god, and perhaps he is talking, or is in an inn, or on a journey; or perhaps he is asleep and must be awaked." So they cried with a loud voice, and in their frenzy cut themselves with knives and lancets till they were all covered with blood. But Baal vouchsafed no reply.

When the time of the evening sacrifice drew nigh, Elias built an altar with twelve stones, by which he signified that all Israel should return with one heart to the service of God. He also drew a trench round the altar; and when he had killed the bullock, he cut it in pieces, and laid them on the wood of the altar. Three times the victim and the altar were drenched with water, and the trench was filled therewith, to show in a more striking manner the miracle that God would work.

When all was ready, Elias drew near and prayed, saying: " O Lord God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Israel, show this day that Thou art the God of Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that according to Thy commandment I have done all these things. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may learn that Thou art the Lord God, and that Thou hast turned their heart again."

No sooner was his prayer ended than fire came down from heaven and consumed not only the holocaust and the wood, but the very stones of the altar, and dried up the water in the trenches. The people fell on their faces, exclaiming: " The Lord, He is God! the Lord, He is God!" Then, by the direction of Elias, the prophets of Baal were seized and led away to the torrent Cison, where they were slain.

Elias said to Achab: " Go up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain." He then went to the top of Carmel, and casting himself down upon the ground, bowed his head between his knees, after he had sent his servant to look towards the sea for the first sign of the coming rain. Six times did the servant return to say that he could see nothing; but being sent a seventh time, he came back saying he had seen a little cloud no larger than a man's foot, rising out of the sea. At once Elias sent word to Achab to prepare his chariot with all speed and to hasten down the mountain, lest the rain should prevent him. Soon the clouds began to gather overhead, and the rain to descend in torrents, whereupon Achab hastened to Jezrahel, preceded by Elias.

When it was told to Jezabel that the prophets of Baal had been slain she was filled with anger, and sent a messenger to tell Elias that before that same hour on the morrow he should be as one of them. Elias was filled with alarm, and, with a single attendant, fled to Bersabee of Juda. Leaving his servant, he went into the desert and prayed to God to take him out of life. He then cast himself upon the ground and fell asleep.

Presently he was awakened by an angel, who bade him rise and eat. Looking round he beheld a cake and a pitcher of water, and when he had eaten and quenched his thirst, he fell asleep again. A second time the angel awoke him, and again bade him refresh himself, for he had a long journey before him. The prophet did as he was bid, and in the strength of that food walked forty days and forty nights, until he came to Horeb, the Mount of God, where he abode in a cave.

Here the word of the Lord came to him, saying: "What dost thou here, Elias?" and he was commanded to stand forth and behold the manifestation of God. First there came a mighty wind which shattered the rocks of Horeb in pieces; but the Lord was not in the wind. Next an earthquake caused the rocks to tremble; but the Lord was not in the earthquake. Then a fire burst out of the rocks; but the Lord was not in the fire. Lastly, there was a whistling of a gentle air. Elias covered his face with his mantle, and heard the voice of the Lord bidding him go through the desert to Damascus and anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. He was also commanded to anoint Jehu to be king of Israel, and Eliseus to be prophet in his stead.

When Elias came to Abelmeula, he found Eliseus in a field, ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, and threw his mantle over him. Eliseus said to him: "Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee." Elias consented; and after Eliseus had given a parting feast to his friends, and taken leave of his parents, he followed Elias and ministered to him (3 Kings xviii., xix.).

CHAPTER C

ISRAEL—REIGN OF ACHAB (Concluded)

Naboth's Vineyard.

At Jezrahel Achab had built a palace, near which was a vineyard owned by a man named Naboth. Wishing to convert this into a garden, Achab offered either to buy it or to give him a better vineyard in exchange. But Naboth said to him: "The Lord be merciful to me, and not let me give thee the inheritance of my fathers." His refusal so disturbed the king that he cast himself upon his bed in a fit of vexation and would not eat.

Having learned the cause of her husband's distress, Jezabel said to him: "Thou art of great authority indeed, and governest well the kingdom of Israel. Arise, and eat bread, and be of good cheer. I

will give thee the vineyard of Naboth." She then wrote letters in Achab's name, sealed them with his ring, and sent them to the ancients and to the chief men in the city. In the king's name they were commanded to call an assembly and to summon Naboth before it. Two false witnesses were next procured, who swore that they had heard him blaspheme God and the king; and on this false charge he was led out and stoned to death. But Naboth's blood cried to heaven for vengeance.

No sooner had Achab taken possession of the vineyard than the word of God came to Elias the Thesbite, saying: "Arise, and speak to Achab: Thus saith the Lord: Thou hast slain. Moreover also thou hast taken possession. In this place wherein the dogs have licked the blood of Naboth, they shall lick thy blood also. I will bring evil upon thee; I will cut down thy posterity; I will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nabat. As to Jezabel, the dogs shall devour her in the fields of Jezrahel."

Terrified by these words, Achab rent his garments and put on hair-cloth. He moreover fasted, slept on sackcloth, and walked with his head bowed down in sorrow. God said to Elias: "Because he hath humbled himself for My sake, I will not bring this evil in his days, but in his son's days will I bring this evil upon his house."

At this time Juda and Israel were on terms of peace and friendship, and in the third year of the peace, Josaphat, king of Juda, who had married his son Joram to Athalia, the daughter of Achab and Jezabel, paid a visit to the court of Achab. He even expressed his willingness to join Achab in an expedition against the Syrians for the recovery of Ramoth-Galaad. Before embarking on the undertaking, however, he sought the Divine will through the prophet Micheas. Summoned to speak in the presence of the two kings, Micheas replied: "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, like sheep that have no shepherd; and the Lord said: These have no master; let every one of them return to his house in peace."

But Achab, relying on promises of victory from his own false prophets, was still bent on undertaking the war, and with Josaphat marched out to attack Ramoth-Galaad. In the press of the fight, Josaphat, who was present in his royal robes, was in danger of being slain, having been mistaken for Achab; and it was only by crying out that he was not Achab that the tide of battle was rolled in another direction.

But Achab's time had come; for an archer fired at random a shaft which struck the king and penetrated his lungs. Achab said to the charioteer: "Turn, and carry me out of the army, for I am grievously wounded." His death that same evening put an end to the fight; for as soon as it became known that Achab was slain, the cry went through all the army: "Let every man return to his own city, and to his own country." The king's body was conveyed to Samaria; and as the chariot in which he had received his death-wound was being washed in the pool of Samaria, the dogs licked up the blood. His son Ochozias was his successor (3 Kings xxi., xxii.).

CHAPTER CI

ISRAEL—REIGN OF OCHOZIAS

Elias taken up into Heaven.

The character of Ochozias, son of Achab and Jezabel, is given us in the words of the Sacred Text: "He did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father and mother, and in the way of Jeroboam."

Having fallen one day through a lattice from the flat roof of his palace, he received such injuries that his life was in danger. Anxious to know whether he would recover or not, he sent messengers to consult Beelzebub, the god of Accaron.

The messengers were met by Elias, who bade them return and tell their master that, because he had sent to inquire of Beelzebub, his hurt should prove fatal, nor should he leave his bed alive.

The king was filled with rage, and asked what manner of man he was who had thus dared to stop them. From their description of the prophet as "a hairy man with a girdle of leather about his loins," Ochozias at once recognised the person of Elias, and straightway sent one of his captains with a band of fifty men to find him and seize him.

The party discovered Elias sitting on the top of a hill; and when the captain called to him, "Man of God, the king hath commanded that thou come down," he answered: "If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and thy fifty." And so it happened.

Finding that his men did not return, he sent another body, but they, too, met with a like fate. The leader of a third party fell upon his knees before Elias, and besought him to spare his life and accompany him to the king. By the command of God, Elias went with him; and when he was brought into the presence of Ochozias, he repeated to him what he had already spoken to the messengers. Ochozias died as Elias had foretold, and left his crown to Joram, his brother.

The time was now at hand when God was to remove Elias from the world. Forewarned of what was about to take place, Elias tried to persuade Eliseus to remain behind at Galgal while he himself went forward to Bethel. But Eliseus could not be prevailed upon to stay, and said to Elias: "As the Lord liveth, and as my soul liveth, I will not leave thee." As they were approaching Bethel, the sons of the prophets went out of the city to meet them, and said to Eliseus: "Dost thou know that this day the Lord will take away thy master from thee?" To this Eliseus made answer: "I also know it; hold your peace."

At Bethel, too, Elias in vain besought Eliseus to stay and allow him to proceed alone to Jericho. Even a third time he begged him not to go any further, saying that the Lord had sent him to

go as far as the Jordan. All to no purpose; so the two went on together.

When they came to the Jordan, Elias took off his mantle, and folding it, struck the river with it, whereupon the waters immediately parted and left a dry path to the opposite bank. No sooner had they reached the other side than the waters closed and flowed on as before.

Here Elias said to his faithful follower: "Ask what thou wilt have me to do for thee before I be taken from thee." Eliseus answered: "I beseech thee that in me may be thy double spirit." Elias said to him: "Thou hast asked a hard thing. Nevertheless if thou see me when I am taken from thee, thou shalt have what thou hast asked; but if thou see me not, thou shalt not have it." And as they went on, walking and talking together, behold a fiery chariot and fiery horses separated them, and Elias was borne up to heaven in a whirlwind.

When Eliseus saw him thus raised up, he cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the driver thereof!" and for very grief rent his garments. Taking the mantle which had fallen from Elias, he put it on himself and returned to the Jordan. Hoping to see the waters divide as they had done for Elias, he struck them with the prophet's mantle, but without result. Not discouraged, however, he struck them a second time, saying: "Where is now the God of Elias?" The waters instantly divided, and he passed over on dry ground. The sons of the prophets, who had come from Jericho, prostrated themselves before him and begged that fifty men might be sent to seek for Elias, whom the Spirit of the Lord might have set down on some mountain or in some valley. He reluctantly consented; but after a prolonged search of three days they found him not.

During his stay at Jericho, Eliseus was visited by the chief men, who told him that the water of the city was bad and the soil barren. The prophet cast salt into the spring from which the city was supplied, and the water was made sweet and the ground fertile.

From Jericho Eliseus proceeded to Bethel, the chief city of the calf-worship. He was met by a number of boys, who mocked him and called to him: "Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head." The prophet turned round and cursed them in the name of the Lord; and immediately there rushed out of the forest two bears, which tore forty-two of them (3 Kings xxii.; 4 Kings i., ii.).

CHAPTER CII

JUDA—REIGNS OF JOSAPHAT, JORAM, AND OCHOZIAS

DURING his long reign of twenty-five years JOSAPHAT, the successor of Asa, "walked in the way of Asa, his father, and he declined not from it; and he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord."

He set himself to the task of banishing all abuses out of his kingdom; he sent princes, priests, and Levites through the various cities of Juda to explain the law of the Lord to the people and to teach the

proper observance of it; and the fear of the Lord came upon the kingdoms round about Juda, so that they durst not make war against him. Of all the kings of Juda none so much resembled David as Josaphat did; and God so blessed him that he grew to be great and glorious.

After his return from the battle of Ramoth-Galaad, in which he had joined Achab, he entered with zeal into the work of reforming the government of his subjects, and went through his kingdom, appointing judges in all the fortified cities. In Jerusalem he established a court of priests and Levites and heads of families, presided over by the High Priest, to decide in cases relating to religion, as well as to inheritance and matrimonial cases. In giving his instructions to his judges he said: "Take heed what you do, for you exercise not the judgment of man, but of the Lord. Let the fear of the Lord be with you, and do all things with diligence, for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor desire of gifts."

The peace of Josaphat's reign was at last disturbed by a combined invasion of Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites. A solemn fast was proclaimed throughout the land; and in the midst of his people, the king stood and prayed for help to the God of their fathers, the God who was ruler over all kings and nations, in whose hand was strength and power, and whom no one could resist. Early the next morning the march was begun, the Levites leading the way and singing: "Give glory to the Lord, for His mercy endureth for ever."

A scene of terrible slaughter had commenced among the enemy. The different nations became confused among the ambushes which they had set for Josaphat's army, and began to fall upon one another in the thought that it was the enemy they were attacking. Now it was the Ammonites and the Moabites who were slaughtering the Edomites; now, again, it was the Ammonites and the Moabites who were destroying each other. When the men of Juda came up, they were astonished to find the ground covered with the multitude of the dead, and no enemy to oppose them. Three days were spent in collecting the spoils, and on the fourth day all assembled to praise God in the Valley of Blessing (*Berachah*), so called from their blessing and thanking God in that spot for the wonderful victory He had given them. The rest of Josaphat's reign was spent in peace.

Josaphat's next work was to construct a fleet, and in this he was joined by Ochozias, King of Israel. At Aziongaber, on the Red Sea, his ships were shattered or wrecked before they could set sail, a disaster brought upon him on account of his alliance with the wicked Ochozias, as he learnt from the prophet Eliezer.

At length the good and pious Josaphat passed away and was buried in the city of David, leaving the crown to his unworthy son Joram.

JORAM began his reign by cruelly putting to death his six brothers, besides many of the princes of the land. Unlike his pious father, he imitated in all their wickedness the kings of Israel, having married

Athalia, the daughter of Achab and Jezabel. He even set up the worship of Baal in the high places.

Elias, who had foreseen the impiety of Joram, wrote a letter of warning to him, in which he foretold the destruction of his house, and his death by a most loathsome disease. But the prophet's threats were without effect.

The words of Elias, however, were soon to be proved true. God stirred up the Philistines, who plundered and laid waste the land of Juda. They even closed in upon Jerusalem, plundered the king's palace, carried off all his substance, and either killed or led away all his wives and sons, except his youngest son Ochozias.

Last of all came the loathsome disease predicted by Elias. For two years the unhappy king was racked by a disease of the bowels which left him without comfort night or day, till at length, worn out with suffering, he died. His people did not bury him in the sepulchres of the kings.

Ochozias, the son of Joram, reigned only one year; but, instigated by his mother Athalia, he did much that was evil. On his death the crown of Juda was usurped by Athalia, who put to death her grandsons. Only one escaped the clutches of the murderess—namely Joas, the youngest—whom Josabeth, the sister of Ochozias and wife of the High Priest Joiada, succeeded in carrying away secretly and concealing in the House of God during the six years that Athalia reigned over Juda (3 Kings xxii.; 4 Kings viii., xi.; 2 Par. xvii.-xxii.).

CHAPTER CIII

ISRAEL—REIGN OF JORAM, SON OF ACHAB

The Prophet Eliseus.

Joram, the son of Achab and Jezabel, succeeded his brother Ochozias. It is said of him that he did evil before the Lord, but not to the extent done by his father and mother, for he took away the statues of Baal which his father had made; yet the golden calves set up by Jeroboam he did not remove.

The wonderful miracles of Eliseus form the chief theme in the story of Joram's reign. We next read of his coming to the help of a poor widow whose two sons were on the point of being sold as slaves to pay her debts. In her distress she told Eliseus that nothing now remained to her but a little oil. He directed her to borrow of her neighbours as many vessels as she could, and bade her pour into them the oil she had left. She obeyed, and to her surprise found that the oil did not cease to flow till she had filled every vessel. "Go," he said, "sell the oil, and pay thy creditor; and thou and thy sons live on the rest."

Eliseus often passed through the town of Sunam, where dwelt a certain great and pious lady. She one day said to her husband: "I perceive this is a holy man of God who often passeth by us.

Let us, therefore, make a little chamber, and put a little bed in it for him, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick, that when he cometh to us he may abide there." Wishing to repay her kindness, the prophet bade her ask any favour she would. Now she was childless, and earnestly desired that God might bless her with a son. Eliseus told her that her wish should be fulfilled, and that by that time the following year a son should be born to her. And so it came to pass.

When her child was grown to boyhood, and had on one occasion gone to the harvest field where his father was busy among the reapers, he was suddenly seized with such severe pains in the head that he had to be carried home, and died shortly afterwards on his mother's knee. In her distress she sought out Eliseus, and casting herself at his feet, made known to him her sad loss. The prophet said to his servant Giezi: " Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thy hand, and go. If any man meet thee, salute him not; and if any man salute thee, answer him not; and lay my staff upon the face of the child." Eliseus then rose up and accompanied the woman; but before they reached Sunam they were met by Giezi, who told Eliseus that, although he had acted as he had been directed, the child was not yet risen. Eliseus entered the house and stretched himself over the body, whereupon the boy gasped seven times and opened his eyes. Eliseus then called the woman and restored her son to her.

One day the sons of the prophets sat before Eliseus in Galgal, listening to his instructions. Not wishing to send them away hungry, the prophet ordered one of his servants to set the great pot on the fire and to boil some pottage for them. Ignorant of the poisonous nature of the wild gourd, the servant shredded some into the contents of the vessel; but when those who had partaken of the pottage discovered what had happened, they exclaimed; " Death is in the pot, O man of God!" Instantly Eliseus asked for some meal; and when he had poured this into the pot, he bade his followers eat without fear. The pottage had lost its bitterness and was now perfectly harmless.

On another occasion Eliseus distributed twenty small barley loaves among a hundred men, and all were astonished to find that, after every man had eaten his fill, there remained something over.

We next come to the story of Naaman, the Syrian general, who was stricken with the fearful disease of leprosy. Among the attendants of Naaman's wife was a Jewish maiden who had been carried off captive from her people, and who had heard of the wonderful miracles wrought by Eliseus. She one day said to her mistress: " I wish my master had been with the prophet that is in Samaria; he would certainly have healed him of the leprosy which he hath."

The lady made known to Naaman what her Hebrew maid had said, and straightway he referred to King Benadad what he had heard. The king at once sent him as the bearer of rich presents to Joram, king of Israel, and with a letter which read thus: " When thou shalt receive this letter, know that I have sent to thee Naaman, my servant, that thou mayest heal him of his leprosy."

Taking the letter to mean a threat, Joram was alarmed, and rent his garments, saying: "Am I God, to be able to kill and give life, that this man hath sent to me to heal a man of his leprosy? Mark, and see how he seeketh occasions against me."

This came to the ears of Eliseus, who sent a message to the king desiring that Naaman would come to him so that he might know that there was a prophet in Israel.

Soon a procession of horses and chariots was seen coming in the direction of Eliseus's dwelling; but while it was yet some distance off the prophet bade a servant go and tell Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan, after which his flesh would recover its health, and he would be made clean.

Naaman was indignant and turned back, saying: "I thought he would have come out to me, and would have invoked the name of his God, and touching with his hand the place of the leprosy, would have healed me. Are not the Abana and the Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel, that I may wash in them and be made clean?" His servants, however, said to him: "Father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, surely thou shouldst have done it. How much rather what he now hath said to thee." Naaman yielded to their advice, and going down to the Jordan, washed seven times, according to the word of the prophet. On coming out of the water the seventh time, behold he was made clean and his flesh was as the flesh of a little child.

Filled with gratitude, Naaman at once sought out the prophet and said to him: "In truth I know there is no other God in all the earth, but only in Israel." He then offered him costly gifts, but the prophet refused to accept even the smallest present.

When he left, Naaman took with him two loads of earth with which to erect an altar to the true God, being resolved no longer to worship the gods of his own country.

Eliseus's servant Giezi had been a witness of all that had passed, and wishing to possess the riches which his master had refused, he stealthily left Eliseus and followed Naaman. When Naaman saw him running towards him, he leapt down from his chariot and advanced to meet him, inquiring of him if all were well. "All is well," said Giezi, "but my master hath sent me to thee to ask for a talent of silver and two changes of garments, as two young men, sons of the prophets, have come to him from Mount Ephraim." Naaman was pleased with the request, and gladly gave him *two* talents of silver and two changes of garments, and sent back two of his servants to carry them for him.

It was evening when Giezi returned. After dismissing the two men he secretly stowed away his ill-gotten riches, and went in as usual to attend on his master. Eliseus said to him: "Whence comest thou, Giezi?" He answered: "Thy servant went no whither." "Was not my spirit present with thee," said Eliseus, "when the man turned back from his chariot to meet thee? So now thou hast received the garments, and hast received money to buy olive-yards

and vineyards, and sheep and oxen, and men-servants and maid-servants. But the leprosy of Naaman shall stick to thee and to thy seed for ever."

And Giezi went out from him a leper as white as snow.

Soon after this, Eliseus was one day near the Jordan when he found the sons of the prophets cutting down timber with which to build for themselves a dwelling. The head of one of their axes chanced to fly off and fall into the river. The owner of the axe was much distressed at his loss; but Eliseus bade him cast a piece of wood into the water where the axe had disappeared, and when this was done, the iron axe, to the astonishment of all, was seen to rise to the surface, and was recovered to the great joy of its owner (4 Kings iii.-vi.).

CHAPTER CIV

ISRAEL—REIGN OF JORAM, SON OF ACHAB (Continued)

The Prophet Eliseus.

Had it not been for the timely warnings of Eliseus, the Syrians, under Benadad, would all this time have succeeded in getting Joram into their power. But whatever were the secret plans made by Benadad for ensnaring Joram, they were defeated by Joram's receiving information of his intentions. Benadad suspected treachery among his own counsellors, and said: "Why do you not tell me who it is that betrays me to the king?" When they told him that it was the prophet Eliseus at Dothan who had made known his plans to Joram, Benadad gave orders for him to be seized at once.

Dothan, which lay some twelve miles north of Samaria, was by night surrounded by a strong body of men. When the servant of Eliseus went out early in the morning, he was filled with astonishment to see the city besieged, and hastened back to tell his master. Eliseus calmed the fear of his servant by telling him that there were more to fight for them than against them. At the prophet's prayer the eyes of the servant were opened, and he beheld the whole mountain full of horses and chariots of fire, drawn up to protect Eliseus.

The Syrians now drew near to seize the man of God; but at his prayer they were struck blind, and while in this state were led to Samaria by Eliseus, who said to them: "Follow me, and I will show you the man whom you seek." When they were come into the city, and were completely at the mercy of the Israelites, Eliseus again besought the Lord, saying: "Lord, open the eyes of these men, that they may see." Their surprise was great when they found themselves in the midst of Samaria, cut off from all chance of escape. Joram would have put them to death without mercy, but, yielding to the prophet's request, he gave them food, and sent them away unharmed to their master. For a long time after this the Syrians ceased their incursions into Israel.

Later on, however, Benadad laid siege to Samaria, and reduced the

inhabitants to the direst extreme of famine. Things came to such a pass that the king was called upon to settle a disputed case between two women, the mere thought of which fills us with horror. One of the women, being asked to state her case, said: "This woman and I agreed to boil our children for food, she promising that, if I boiled my child first, she would then bring hers to do likewise. Now, when we had eaten my son, she took her own son and concealed him, nor will she fulfil her promise."

The king was filled with grief and horror, and, rending his garments for sorrow, he rose up quickly and withdrew. When he again appeared before the people, it was seen that he wore hair-cloth next his skin.

At length Joram allowed himself to be carried away by feelings of bitter resentment against Eliseus, whom he accused of being the cause of all these calamities. In a fit of desperation he cried out: "May God do so and so to me, if the head of Eliseus, the son of Saphat, shall stand on him this day." And he at once sent a messenger to carry out the cruel order, while he himself followed quickly after.

Knowing in spirit what the king had commanded, Eliseus said to those about him: "Do you know that this son of a murderer hath sent to cut off my head? Look then; when the messenger shall come, shut the door, and suffer him not to come in; for behold the sound of his master's feet is behind him."

By the time the king had reached the prophet's house his anger had had time to cool, and in his despair he said to Eliseus: "Behold so great an evil is from the Lord: what shall I look for more from the Lord?" Eliseus said to him: "To-morrow, about this time, a bushel of fine flour shall be sold for a stater* in the gate of Samaria." One of the officers of the king exclaimed: "If the Lord shall make flood-gates in heaven, can that possibly be which thou sayest?" Eliseus answered: "Thou shalt see it with thy eyes, but shalt not eat thereof."

That very night the Syrian camp was thrown into the wildest confusion, for the Lord had caused them to hear sounds as of chariots and horsemen, and as of a vast army coming up against them. In their alarm they said one to another: "Behold, the King of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hethites and of the Egyptians, and they are come upon us." Then, under cover of the darkness, they fled in terror, leaving their tents and their horses and asses in the camp, desirous only of saving their lives.

Later that same night, four lepers who chanced to be standing near the gates of Samaria said one to another: "What mean we to stay here to die? If we enter into the city, we shall die of the famine; and if we remain here, we must also die. Come, therefore, and let us run over to the camp of the Syrians." They did so; and coming to where the outposts were supposed to be stationed, they were astonished to find no one there. They then advanced till they came

A stater = a sicle = 2s. 8d.

in sight of the tents. Still seeing no man, they made bold to enter one of the tents, which to their surprise they found deserted, while all around was abundance of food together with gold and silver plate. They satisfied their cravings of hunger, and then proceeded to collect as much gold and silver as each could carry away. As they returned laden with spoil, one of them said: "We do not well, for this is a day of good tidings. If we hold our peace, or do not tell it till the morning, we shall be charged with a crime. Come, let us go and tell it in the king's court." They accordingly related to the guards at the city gate all that they had seen and done.

The astonished guards lost no time in informing the king; and, although it was yet night, he arose and said to his attendants: "I will tell you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we suffer great famine, and therefore they are gone out of the camp, and lie hid in the fields." At the suggestion of one of his attendants, the country was reconnoitred as far as the Jordan; and only when he had discovered beyond doubt that the Syrians had indeed fled did Joram permit his people to go out and pillage the deserted camp.

Soon they returned, every man laden with as much as he could carry; and the officer who had been stationed at the gate to prevent the people from crushing one another was himself trampled to death by the crowd. He was the one who, on the previous day, had scoffed at Eliseus. "He saw with his eyes, but he did not eat thereof." Not long after this, Benadad was suffocated by one of his attendants, Hazael, who then assumed the sovereignty (4 Kings vi-viii.).

CHAPTER CV

ISRAEL—DEATH OF JORAM AND JEZABEL

JORAM now tried to recover Ramoth-Galaad from the Assyrians. Being severely wounded during an attack upon the city, he withdrew to Jezrahel to have his wounds attended to, leaving one of his captains, Jehu, to command in his stead. It was now that Eliseus instructed one of the sons of the prophets to hasten to Ramoth-Galaad, where he was to anoint Jehu to be king of Israel, and to announce to him the Divine will that he should utterly blot out the family of Achab. Jehu's comrades spread their garments as a carpet under his feet, and in sight of the whole army, sounded the trumpet and cried out: "Jehu is king."

With a small escort Jehu set out in his chariot for Jezrahel. His approach was seen by a watchman stationed on one of the towers. He at once announced the fact to Joram, who sent forward a horseman to meet the party, and to ask whether their coming meant peace. Jehu replied: "What hast thou to do with peace? Go behind and follow me." A second messenger was treated in like manner. By this time the little party had approached near enough to be recognised by the watchman, who said to his comrades: "The driving it like the driving of Jehu, for he drives furiously."

Believing, no doubt, that Jehu had come as the bearer of important

news from Ramoth-Galaad, Joram called for his chariot, and went out to meet him as far as the field of Naboth. To Joram's inquiry if his intentions were peaceful, Jehu made answer: "What peace, so long as the wickedness of Jezabel, thy mother, and her many sorceries flourish?"

Suspecting treachery, Joram at once wheeled about his chariot and fled in all haste towards the city; but an arrow from Jehu's bow struck him between the shoulders, and penetrating his heart, killed him on the spot. Jehu said to his captains: "Take him and cast him into the field of Naboth, for I remember when I and thou, sitting in a chariot, followed Achab, this man's father, that the Lord laid this burden upon him."

Jehu now proceeded to Jezrahel; and when his coming was made known to Jezabel, she painted her face and adorned her head; and looking out from her window as Jehu passed by, she called to him: "Can there be peace for Zambri who killed his master?" When Jehu saw who it was, he bade her attendants throw her headlong from the window. They did so. The wall was bespattered with her blood, and Jehu's horse trampled on her mangled corpse. Shortly afterwards, Jehu said to his men: "Go and see after that cursed woman, and bury her, because she is a king's daughter." But when the men came to bury her, they found nothing but the skull, the feet, and the extremities of her hands. The dogs had carried off all the rest. The prediction of Elias was fulfilled (4 Kings viii., ix.).

CHAPTER CVI

ISRAEL—REIGN OF JEHU

JEHU'S accession was marked by the slaughter of Achab's descendants. As there were still left seventy sons of Achab in Samaria, Jehu sent a letter to the chief men of the city, bidding them choose out the best of their master's sons and set him on his father's throne, and fight for the house of Achab. The ancients were filled with fear for their own safety, and said one to another: "Behold, two kings could not stand before him, and how shall we be able to resist?" They therefore sent to Jehu this message: "We are thy servants; whatsoever thou shalt command us we will do; neither will we make us a king. Do thou all that pleaseth thee." A second letter from Jehu was the reply: "If you be mine, and will obey me, take the heads of the sons of your master, and come to me to Jezrahel tomorrow at this time." The next day saw two ghastly piles of heads on either side of the city gate. Jehu next set himself to hunt out and slay all that were left of the family of Achab, together with their chief supporters among the ancients and the priests.

On his way to Samaria he met Jonadab, the son of Rechab, whom he invited to get up beside him in his chariot, and to come and see his zeal for the Lord. This same Jonadab was a holy personage, afterwards famous as the founder of the Rechabites, a sort of religious

concerning whose rule we read in the Prophecy of Jeremias: "We will not drink wine, because Jonadab, the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying: You shall drink no wine, neither you nor your children, for ever; neither shall you build houses, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyards, nor have any; but you shall dwell in tents all your days" (Jer. xxxv. 6, 7). Jehu took Jonadab with him into Samaria, where he slew to a man all that were found of Achab's family, according to the word of God spoken to Elias.

Jehu's next task was to uproot the worship of Baal, and to leave no trace of it in his kingdom. With this object in view he proclaimed a great feast in honour of the false god and assembled the people for this purpose. On the appointed day the temple was filled from end to end. The sacrifices were begun; and while the attention of all was taken up with the ceremonies, Jehu gave the signal to the soldiers whom he had previously stationed near the gates, and they rushed forward and slew Baal's followers to a man. The statue of Baal was broken in pieces, and the temple itself was destroyed. Yet Jehu failed to walk with all his heart in the law of the God of Israel, for he did not forsake the golden calves that were in Bethel and Dan. He died after a reign of twenty-eight years, and was succeeded by his son Joachaz (4 Kings x.).

CHAPTER CVII

JUDA—REIGNS OF ATHALIA AND JOAS

For six years did the young Joas, the only surviving son of Ochozias, remain in his place of concealment in the Temple, his very existence being unsuspected by the cruel Athalia. But when the boy was seven years old, Joiada, the High Priest, took into his confidence certain captains of hundreds, with whom he made a covenant, and to whom he entrusted the charge of gathering together the Levites out of all the cities of Juda, and the chiefs of the families, who in answer to his summons assembled at Jerusalem. "Behold," he said, "the king's son shall reign, as the Lord hath said of the son of David." To ensure the success of his undertaking, he chose the Sabbath, when the Levites were wont to replace one another, so that many might assemble without suspicion.

Having disposed his guards, Joiada commanded the rest of the people to remain in the outer courts of the Temple. All was now ready. The young prince was brought forward, the Book of the Law was put into his hand, the crown was placed upon his head, and Joiada anointed him with oil and made him king. The ceremony ended, a joyous acclamation arose, and all the people cried out: "God save the king."

The shouts of the people reached the ears of Athalia, who at once hastened to the Temple to discover the cause. There she found the king with the royal crown upon his head, and the people rejoicing and the trumpets sounding. Filled with alarm, she exclaimed: "A conspiracy! a conspiracy!" Joiada bade his centurions lead

her without the precincts of the Temple and slay her; at the same time he ordered them to strike down any man who should attempt to follow her. His commands were carried out to the very letter; and in this way did the family of Achab come to an end.

The covenant was now renewed by all the people. Joiada engaged both king and people to be faithful to their common Lord and to each other, and to observe the Law; whereupon the High Priest gave them the assurance that God would protect them. The Temple of Baal was next invaded and utterly destroyed, the priest of Baal being slain before his own altar. Joas was then conducted in solemn procession into the palace, and was set on the throne of the kings.

For more than twenty years, as long as Joiada lived, Joas did that which was right before the Lord. He repaired the Temple and supplied whatever was wanting for the public services, as Athalia had caused the sacred vessels to be carried off.

But a great change came over him when Joiada died. Deprived of his wise counsellor and father, he fell into the hands of wicked flatterers, forsook the worship of the God of his fathers, and even set up again the worship of Baal.

Filled with zeal for the honour of God, Zacharias, the High Priest and son of Joiada, thus boldly addressed the people: "Why transgress you the commandment of the Lord, which will not be for your good, and why have you forsaken the Lord to make Him forsake you?" In his anger, Joas, forgetful of all that he owed to the family of Joiada, had him led into the court of the Temple and there stoned to death.

But a year had not passed from the death of Zacharias when news arrived that the Syrian army under Hazael was marching against Jerusalem. In the battle which ensued Juda was routed, and Jerusalem itself was saved from plunder only by the surrender of the sacred vessels of the Temple.

When the Syrian army departed, Joas was prostrated by sickness; and it was while he was thus confined to his bed that two of his servants, to revenge the blood of Zacharias, fell upon him and slew him. His son Amasias succeeded him (4 Kings xi., xii.; 2 Par. xxii.-xxiv.).

CHAPTER CVIII

ISRAEL—REIGNS OF JOACHAZ AND JOAS

Death of Eliseus.

Joachaz, the son of Jehu, followed the evil courses of Jeroboam; and for his sins God permitted him to suffer from the ravages of the kings of Syria till the forces of Israel were reduced to little more than 10,000 fighting men. But his son Joas was destined to snatch Israel from the burden of Syrian oppression.

It was in the reign of Joas that the prophet Eliseus was seized with his last illness. The king hastened to his bedside. Seeing him feeble and worn, Joas was moved to tears, and in the fulness of his

heart exclaimed: "O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the guider thereof."

His act of piety met with its reward. Eliseus bade Joas open the window looking east, and shoot an arrow in the direction of Galaad, then occupied by the Syrians. While Joas was in the act of bending his bow, the prophet laid his hand on that of the king, and, as the arrow sped from the bow, he said: "The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of the deliverance from Syria: thou shalt strike the Syrians in Aphec till thou consume them."

He next told Joas to strike on the ground with an arrow. Thrice Joas did so; but because he had not struck oftener, Eliseus was displeased and said: "If thou hadst smitten five or six or seven times, thou hadst smitten Syria even to utter destruction; but now three times thou shalt smite it."

Eliseus died at the age of ninety years. His tomb was in a spacious cave, the entrance to which, according to custom, was secured by a great stone. Some time after this, when the body of a man was being borne out for burial, the funeral party was surprised by the sudden appearance of a roving band of Moabites. In haste the stone was removed from Eliseus's tomb, and the corpse thrown into the recess that contained the remains of the prophet. No sooner did the body touch the relics of Eliseus than the man who had been dead came to life again and stood up.

Full of confidence, Joas went to war with the king of Syria, and three times, as the prophet had foretold, did victory attend his arms.

Early in this reign Amasias, who had succeeded his father Joas to the crown of Juda, marched against Israel, and the two kings met at Bethsames. The army of Amasias was scattered and he himself was made prisoner and led to Jerusalem by Joas, who destroyed 400 cubits of the wall, took away all the treasures of the Temple and of the king's palace, and returned with numerous hostages to Samaria. At his death Joas was succeeded by his son Jeroboam (4 Kings xiii.).

CHAPTER CIX

JUDA—REIGNS OF AMASIAS, AZARIAS, AND JOATHAM

OF AMASIAS we are told that he did what was good in the sight of the Lord, but yet not with a perfect heart.

When about to enter on an expedition against Edom, he took into his pay 10,000 Israelites, but, warned by a prophet, he dismissed them and sent them back burning with rage to their own country. In the Vale of Salt Pits, south of the Dead Sea, he defeated the Edomites with great slaughter, and put to death 10,000 prisoners by casting them headlong from the top of a steep rock.

On his return Amasias set up the idols of the Edomites and burnt incense to them, despite the warning of one of the prophets. "Art thou the king's counsellor?" he asked. "Be quiet, lest I kill thee."

Puffed up with his victory, he next challenged Joas, king of Israel, with the lamentable result related in the last chapter.

After a reign of twenty-nine years, he was slain by his own people in a conspiracy that was raised against him. His son Azarias succeeded him.

Azarias (or Ozias) ascended the throne of Juda at the age of sixteen, and during his long reign of fifty-two years was contemporary with five kings of Israel. As long as he was guided by the wise counsels of the prophet Zacharias, he showed himself one of the ablest of the kings of Juda, and by his victories made his name famous even to the very borders of Egypt. At last, however, he opened his heart to pride, and having arrogated to himself the rights of the priesthood, prepared for himself a miserable end.

Taking upon himself the priestly functions, he presumed to offer incense upon the altar. With a holy zeal the High Priest Azarias, together with eighty other priests, followed the king, and begged him to desist from so rash a purpose. Enraged by their interference, he threatened to strike them with the censer which he held in his hand; but that very instant he felt the hand of God upon him. He was struck with a leprosy which never left him to the day of his death.

The moment the leprosy appeared on his forehead, the priests ran forward to thrust him out of the Temple. But he did not need to be thrust out; in his fright he was anxious to withdraw, "because he had quickly felt the stroke of the Lord." During the remaining six years of his life he dwelt in a house apart, and resigned the government into the hands of his son Joatham.

Joatham, a good and virtuous king, enjoyed a most prosperous reign of sixteen years. He was strengthened because he had his way directed before the Lord his God (4 Kings xiv., xv.; 2 Par. xxv.-xxvii.).

CHAPTER CX

ISRAEL—REIGNS FROM JEROBOAM II. TO PHACEE

The Prophet Jonas.

The fourth king of the house of Jehu was Jeroboam II. Though Jeroboam followed the sinful customs of his predecessors, God was moved by the affliction of Israel, and sent as a saviour this valiant king, who not only repulsed the Syrians and seized their capital, Damascus, but restored to Israel the whole of their former dominion.

It was in his reign that the prophet Jonas was sent by God to the city of Ninive, the capital of Assyria, to announce its approaching destruction if the people did not repent of their sins. "Arise," God said to him, "and go to Ninive, the great city, and preach in it, for the wickedness thereof is come up before Me."

Shrinking from a duty so fraught with danger, Jonas sought by flight to escape from fulfilling the Divine command, and went to

Joppe, where he found a ship on the point of sailing for Tharsis. He embarked at once, and having paid his fare, went down into the inner part of the ship, and soon fell into a deep sleep.

But hardly had they set sail when so great a storm arose that the ship was in danger of sinking, and the sailors cried to their gods to help them; but the storm grew more and more violent. The ship-master roused Jonas from his sleep, saying: "Why art thou fast asleep? Rise up and call upon thy God, if so it be that God will think of us, that we may not perish."

At last it was resolved to cast lots to find out who was the cause of the evil that had come so unexpectedly upon them, and the lot fell upon Jonas. Asked what he had done, and whence he came, he replied that he was a Hebrew and a prophet of God, and that if they wished to save themselves from shipwreck, they must cast him into the sea. "For my sake," he said, "this great tempest is upon you."

Struck by his candour, they wished to spare him, and strove by vigorous rowing to return to land, but in vain. The danger became each moment more threatening, until, in imminent peril of being engulfed, they cast him overboard, and at once the sea became calm.

Yet God would not suffer Jonas to perish. He sent a great fish, which swallowed the prophet up alive, and after three days and three nights threw him up unhurt upon the shore. A second time the word of the Lord came to Jonas: "Arise, and go to Ninive, and preach in it as I bid thee."

Jonas immediately proceeded to Ninive, and, entering the city, cried out in a loud voice: "Yet forty days and Ninive shall be destroyed." His words filled the citizens with alarm; and the king himself was so moved with fear that he descended from his throne, and in sackcloth and ashes proclaimed a general fast. "Let every man," he said, "be converted from his evil way; for who can tell whether God may not turn from His fierce anger and forgive us, and we may not perish?"

God was moved to compassion by their cries for mercy, and did not carry out the judgment He had inspired His prophet to pronounce against them, but spared them.

Fearing he might now pass for a false prophet, Jonas became exceedingly troubled, and prayed the Lord to take him out of life. He went out of the city, and making a booth out of the branches of trees for a protection against the scorching rays of the sun, waited to see what would befall Ninive.

During the night God caused an ivy to grow up, which spread its leaves over the booth, thus forming a cool shade for the prophet; but the following morning a worm struck the ivy and it withered. When the sun rose, there came a hot burning wind, and the prophet was so overwhelmed with the fierce heat that in his affliction he besought the Lord to let him die. God said to him: "Thou art grieved for the ivy for which thou hast not laboured, nor made it to grow. In one night it came up, and in one night it perished. And

shall not I spare Ninive, that great city, in which there are a hundred and twenty thousand persons that do not know how to distinguish between their right hand and their left, and many beasts?"

When Jeroboam's long reign of forty-one years came to an end, the kingdom of Israel fell into a frightful state of anarchy. Jeroboam was succeeded by his son ZACHARIAS, who, after a reign of six months, was assassinated and succeeded by SELLUM. After one month Sellum was slain by MANAHEM, who now came to the throne. In his reign began those attacks from the Assyrians which were to end so disastrously for Israel. When Manahem died, his son Phaceia came into peaceful possession of the kingdom; but his inglorious reign of two years was brought to a violent close by Phacee, one of his captains, who slew him and usurped the throne.

During the reign of PHACEE, which lasted twenty years, Theglathphalasar, king of Assyria, overran Nephtali and Galaad, and carried off the chief inhabitants into Assyria. Phacee was deposed and assassinated by OSEE, one of his own subjects, who came to the throne, the last king of Israel (4 Kings xiv., xx.; Prophecy of Jonas).

Jonas was a figure of Christ's death and resurrection, a fact which Christ Himself declared. Jonas had been ordered to preach, but did so only after his escape; the Gospel was designed to be preached to the Gentiles, and yet Christ would not have it preached till after He had risen. Jonas was cast into the sea to save those on board; Christ died for the redemption of mankind. The prophet, after three days, came out of the fish alive, as Christ on the third day rose again from the tomb.

CHAPTER CXI

JUDA—REIGN OF ACHAZ

ACHAZ succeeded his father Joatham and reigned sixteen years. He plunged into the grossest idolatries of the surrounding nations, even going so far as to offer his own son as a burnt offering to Moloch in imitation of the Chanaanites. "He sacrificed also, and burnt incense on the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree." But God's judgments were soon to overtake him.

Phacee, king of Israel, in conjunction with the Syrian king, Rasin, invaded Juda and marched against Jerusalem. Rasin carried off much booty to Damascus, while Phacee in a great battle slew 120,000 men, and afterwards carried off 200,000 women and children to Samaria; but these were set free and led back again in obedience to the warnings of the prophet Obed.

To this period belongs the celebrated prophecy of Isaias in which the birth of Christ is so clearly foretold. Before Jerusalem was besieged, Isaias was sent to encourage Achaz, and to promise the miraculous birth of the Messias. "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel." To con-

vince him the more, he foretold that the two kings who were coming against him should be destroyed before his own son should be able to say *father*.

Yet, instead of placing his confidence in God, Achaz applied for help to Theglathphalasar, king of Assyria, offering himself as his vassal and sending him as a present all the gold and silver treasures from the Temple, and whatever riches he himself possessed.

This powerful king readily accepted his proposal, and marching at once on Damascus, he slew Rasin and carried away the inhabitants to Cyrene, thus putting an end to the Syrian kingdom. From Phacee, king of Israel, he wrested not only his northern territories, but all his possessions lying to the east of the Jordan. The result of these conquests was what is known as the FIRST CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL, for the Assyrian king led captive the inhabitants of the cities he had conquered.

When the war was over, Achaz had to appear in person at Damascus to do homage to Theglathphalasar for his kingdom. He even went to the extent of erecting in the very precincts of the Temple itself an altar to the Syrian gods, after the pattern of one he had seen at Damascus. At his command the brazen altar of God's House was removed, and this unholy substitute raised up in its stead; for he said: "The gods of the kings of Syria help them, and I will appease them with victims, and they will help me." He next caused altars to be erected at all the corners of Jerusalem, and in all the cities of Juda, on which to burn incense; but by doing so he provoked the God of his fathers. He was cut off at the early age of thirty-six, and was succeeded by his son Ezechias (4 Kings xvi.; 2 Par. xxviii.).

CHAPTER CXII

ISRAEL—OSEE, THE LAST KING

DESTRUCTION OF THE KINGDOM, B.C. 721.

OSEE, the slayer of Phacee, after many years of anarchy, succeeded in establishing himself on the throne. "He did evil before the Lord, but not as the kings of Israel that had been before him." He was the last king of the doomed kingdom of Israel.

Salmanasar, king of Assyria, invaded Israel and compelled Osee to pay tribute to him as his vassal. Determined to throw off the yoke, Osee secretly sent messengers to Sua, king of Egypt, to beg assistance against the Assyrians; but, becoming aware of his intentions, Salmanasar resolved on striking a terrible blow against Israel.

He threw an army round Samaria; but it was not till after a three years' siege that the city at length fell a prey to the ferocity of the conquerors. Its final overthrow was left to Salmanasar's successor, Sargon. When it fell, the king was loaded with chains and cast into prison, and his people were led away as captives into the distant territories of the Medes and Assyrians.

The captive Israelites afterwards became scattered over the

northern parts of Asia. With the exception of one of their priests, neither they nor their children were destined ever to return to their country, which was now colonised by people from Babylon, Avah, Emath, and Cutha, so that the Samaritans were afterwards spoken of as Cutheans. These people brought with them their own superstitions and idolatries, and they feared not the Lord.

But God's anger was stirred up against them; and He sent among them lions, which killed great numbers of them. The result of this was that one of the priests who had been carried away captive from Samaria was sent back to dwell in Bethel and to teach the worship of the true God. In this way the people came to unite Jewish worship with that of idols; " and they made to themselves, of the lowest of the people, priests of the high places; and when they worshipped the Lord, they served also their own gods, according to the customs of the nations out of which they were brought to Samaria.

This, the SECOND CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL, took place in the year B.C. 721. Again and again the people had been entreated to return from their wicked ways, and to keep the precepts and the ceremonies according to the law which God had commanded to their fathers; " and they hearkened not, but hardened their necks like the necks of their fathers who would not obey the Lord their God . . . and the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight " (4 Kings xvii.).

CHAPTER CXIII

THE VIRTUOUS TOBIAS

TOBIAS was one of those unfortunate captives led into banishment after the fall of Samaria. From the days of his childhood he had been trained in the path of virtue, nor did he in his captivity forsake the way of truth. In his youth, when his neighbours were in the habit of going to worship the golden calves of Jeroboam, he fled the company of all, and went up to the Temple at Jerusalem, there to adore the Lord God of Israel.

Upon arriving at man's estate, Tobias married a woman named Anna, who bore him a son, whom they named after his father, and taught from his infancy to fear God and abstain from all evil. And when Tobias, with all his tribe, was led to Ninive, while the rest ate of the forbidden meats of the Gentiles, he, unwilling to defile himself, touched them not.

Tobias was permitted by the Assyrian king to move about at his will and to act as he thought best. He therefore passed from place to place administering consolation and attending to the wants of his fellow-countrymen. Coming to Rages, a city of the Medes, he there found among his kindred a poor man named Gabelus in great want, and lent him ten talents of silver, taking at the same time a promissory note for the repayment of the debt.

But when Sennacherib ascended the Assyrian throne, the freedom granted to Tobias came to an end. This tyrant heaped upon the

captive Israelites the most barbarous cruelties. Many were ruthlessly put to death, and their bodies left in the street without burial, until Tobias, at great personal risk, went out among his kinsfolk, burying their dead, comforting the distressed, and distributing his goods according to the necessities of each. After a time Sennacherib heard of his doings, and, filled with rage, gave orders for Tobias to be slain and his property seized. Warned of his danger, the holy man fled with his wife and son, and remained in concealment till a violent death put an end to the cruel monster. Tobias then returned to the peaceful possession of his property.

On the occasion of a great religious festival Tobias prepared a feast for his friends, and said to his son: "Go and bring some of our tribe that fear God to feast with us." The young man did so, and on his return related how he had found a young Israelite lying slain in the street. Although the dinner was already served, Tobias left his guests, and coming to where the dead body lay, reverently took it up and carried it to his house in order that he might bury it cautiously after sunset. To the remonstrances of his friends for thus exposing himself to danger, he modestly replied that it behoved him to fear God rather than the king.

Once when he had returned home more wearied than usual, he threw himself down on the ground by the wall of his house to rest in the shade. While he lay thus, some dirt from a swallow's nest above him dropped into his eyes and caused the loss of his sight. Yet he repined not, but thanked God for all His mercies. Even his friends went so far as to mock him, and asked: "Where is thy hope for which thou gavest alms and buriedst the dead?" "Speak not so," he said, "for we are the children of the saints, and look for that life which God will give to those that never change their faith from Him."

To his loss of sight was soon added the further infliction of great poverty; and Tobias had to depend for a livelihood on the labours of his wife Anna, who, by employing her hands in weaving, was enabled to gain a scanty sustenance for herself and her little household.

On one occasion, by means of her hard-earned savings, she bought a kid, which she joyfully led home with her as a surprise for her husband. The good man, knowing their utter poverty, was troubled in his mind, and said to her: "Take heed lest perhaps it be stolen; restore it to its owners, for it is not lawful for us either to eat or to touch anything that cometh by theft."

Anna was furious, and bitterly scolded him. She upbraided him, too, as being the cause of their present distress. Tobias patiently bore her reproof, and with tears in his eyes sought comfort in prayer. "Thou art just, O Lord," he exclaimed, "and thy judgments are just, and all thy ways are mercy and truth and judgment. Do with me according to Thy will" (Tob. i.-iii.).

CHAPTER CXIV

THE VIRTUOUS TOBIAS (*Continued*)

WHEN at length he believed his end to be near, Tobias called to him his son that he might give him his last instructions. "Hear the words of my mouth," he said, "and lay them as a foundation in thy heart. When God shall take my soul, thou shalt bury my body; and thou shalt honour thy mother all the days of thy life, being mindful what and how great perils she suffered for thee. And when she also shall have ended her life, bury her by me. All thy days have God in thy mind, and take heed thou never consent to sin. Give alms out of thy substance, and turn not thy face from any poor person; for so it shall come to pass that the face of the Lord shall not be turned from thee. If thou have much, give abundantly: if thou have little, take care even so to bestow willingly a little; for thus thou storest up to thyself a good reward for the day of necessity. For alms deliver from all sin, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness. Alms shall be a great confidence before the most high God to all that give it. Take heed to keep thyself, my son, from all fornication. Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind nor in thy words; for from it all perdition took its beginning. If any man hath done any work for thee, pay him his hire. See thou never do to another what thou wouldst not wish to have done to thee. Eat thy bread with the hungry and the needy, and with thy garments clothe the naked. Seek counsel always of a wise man. Bless God at all times, and desire of Him to direct thy ways. Be not afraid, my son: we lead indeed a poor life; but we shall have many good things if we fear God and depart from sin, and do that which is good." The young man replied: "I will do all things, father, which thou hast commanded me."

Tobias next informed his son of the talents of silver that he had long before lent to Gabelus, and bade him prepare to set out to Rages to recover the loan. He gave him the promissory note of Gabelus, and told him to seek out a faithful companion who would accompany him to Rages and serve him as a guide.

The young Tobias went out forthwith, and was astonished to find a little distance away a comely youth, girded and ready for a journey. He saluted him and asked: "Whence art thou, good young man, and knowest thou the way that leadeth to the country of the Medes?" To this the stranger replied that he not only knew the way to Rages, but was also well acquainted with a certain Gabelus who dwelt there. Astonished at his good fortune, the young Tobias invited the stranger into his father's presence.

Being come in he saluted the old man with the words: "Joy be to thee always;" to which Tobias made reply: "What manner of joy shall be to me who sit in darkness and see not the light of heaven?" Bidding him be of good courage because his cure from God was at hand, the stranger told him that his name was Azarias, and promised

not only to conduct his son to Rages, but to bring him safe home again.

Soon all was ready for the departure, and the young Tobias set out with the stranger. No sooner, however, had her son disappeared out of sight than his mother, filled with grief, exclaimed: "I wish the money for which thou hast sent him had never been; for our poverty was sufficient for us, that we might account it as riches that we saw our son."

On their first day's journey the two travellers reached the Tigris; and while the young Tobias was in the act of bathing his feet in the river, a monstrous fish suddenly made its appearance, and darted towards him as though to devour him. Attracted by his cry for help, his companion told him to seize the fish by the gills and draw it out on to the bank; then to open it and take out its heart, gall, and liver, which were to be kept as useful medicines. They roasted part of the fish for immediate use, and salted as much of the rest as would serve them till they came to Rages.

Tobias now proposed that they should seek out some abode in which to spend the night; whereupon Azarias informed him that at Ecbatana, which was only a short distance away, dwelt a man named Raguel, a near kinsman of Tobias, who had an only daughter, Sara, whom Tobias should ask in marriage.

At this Tobias was grieved, for he had heard it said of this same Sara that she had already been given in marriage to seven husbands in succession, each of whom, on account of his unworthy dispositions, had been killed by the devil on the very night of his marriage. Tobias feared the like misfortune, and that his death might bring his aged parents with sorrow to the grave. But he was reassured by the consoling words of Azarias: "I will show thee who they are over whom the devil can prevail. It is over those who in such manner receive matrimony as to shut out God from themselves and from their mind that the devil hath power."

On welcoming them to his home, Raguel remarked to his wife, Anna, "How like is this young man to my cousin." When he learnt that they were from Ninive, he inquired if they had met there one of the name of Tobias, whose goodness and virtue were known to so many. Azarias replied: "Tobias, concerning whom thou inquirest, is this young man's father." Then did Raguel embrace the youth, and with tears in his eyes kissed him and said: "A blessing be upon thee, my son, because thou art the son of a good and virtuous father." Anna and Sara also wept for joy on thus discovering who their visitor was.

Raguel prepared a feast in honour of his guests; but Tobias said: "I will not eat nor drink here this day unless thou first grant my petition, and promise to give me Sara thy daughter in marriage." Remembering what had happened to the other young suitors, Raguel was much too troubled in mind to answer. The silence, however, was broken by Azarias, who said: "Be not afraid to give her to this man, for to him that feareth God is thy daughter due to be his wife;

therefore another could not have her." Raguel was convinced by these words; and taking the right hand of his daughter, he gave it into the right hand of Tobias, saying: " The God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob be with you; and may He join you together, and fulfil His blessing in you." The marriage contract was then written out, and they made merry, blessing God.

Mindful of the words of Azarias, Tobias carefully observed each particular of the instructions given him; and that same night said to his wife Sara: " Let us pray to God to-day, and to-morrow, and the next day; for we are the children of saints, and we must not be joined together like heathens that know not God."

Fearing that what had happened in the case of Sara's former husbands might have happened to Tobias, Raguel rose early and ordered a grave to be got ready; but when he learnt that his son-in-law was safe and unhurt, he at once caused the grave to be filled, and all praised God, and gave full vent to their feelings of joy and gladness.

Anxious though Tobias was to return to his father's house, Raguel entreated him to remain with them two weeks longer. Tobias consulted his friend, and besought him, moreover, to proceed to Rages to transact the necessary business with Gabelus, and to invite him to come and share in their rejoicings. In a few days Azarias returned with Gabelus, who had gladly paid the debt, and who now, with tears in his eyes, called down the blessing of God upon Tobias and his young bride.

When the time came to say farewell, Raguel bestowed upon Tobias half his substance, and both he and Anna admonished Sara to love her father-in-law and her mother-in-law, to love her husband, to take care of the family, to govern the house, and in all things to act blamelessly. They dismissed her with their blessing; and after they had wished God-speed to Tobias and his companion, the little company started out for Ninive (Tob. iii.-ix.).

CHAPTER CXV

THE VIRTUOUS TOBIAS (*Concluded*)

MEANWHILE the parents of Tobias were in anxious doubt as to the safety of their son. His mother could not be comforted, but daily went to the top of a neighbouring hill in the hope that she might see him coming afar off.

One day she thought she could descry him in the distance, and returned in all haste to her husband, exclaiming joyfully: " Behold thy son cometh." Without a moment's delay, the old man rose up and tried to run to meet him, but stumbling along, he would have fallen had not a servant taken him by the hand.

Azarias said to his companion: " As soon as thou shalt come into thy house, forthwith adore the Lord thy God; and giving thanks to Him, go to thy father and kiss him; then with the gall of the fish which thou carriest with thee anoint his eyes."

The dog which had accompanied the travellers now ran on before,

and, as though he had brought the good news, showed his joy by fawning upon his master and mistress and wagging his tail. Tobias followed close after, and was soon in the embraces of his loved parents.

When the first joy of meeting was over, the young Tobias produced the gall of the fish, and with it anointed his father's eyes. Soon a film, like the skin of an egg, began to come out of them; and when this had been removed, the old man's sight was restored. After they had thanked God for His wonderful mercies, the young Tobias related to his parents all the events of his journey.

To reward Azarias for his services was their next concern. When the suggestion was made that they should give him one half of all the things that had been brought, Azarias took both father and son aside, and only then did he make known to them who he was. "Bless ye the God of heaven," he said; "give glory to Him in the sight of all that live, because He hath shown His mercy to you. When thou didst pray with tears and didst bury the dead, I offered thy prayer to the Lord. And when thou wast most acceptable to the Lord, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee. And now the Lord hath sent me to heal thee and to deliver Sara, thy son's wife, from the devil; for I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord."

When they heard these words, they were troubled, and in awe fell prostrate before God's messenger. But Raphael said: "Peace be to you, fear not. For when I was with you, I was there by the Will of God, bless ye Him and sing praises to Him." When he had said this, he disappeared from their sight.

After recovering his sight Tobias lived forty-two years in great joy and happiness of heart, and at length died in peace at the good old age of 102 years. He foretold the destruction of Ninive and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. After his mother's death, the younger Tobias went with his wife and children to the home of Raguel, his father-in-law (Tob. x.-xiv.).

CHAPTER CXVI

JUDA—REIGN OF EZECHIAS

The Prophet Isaias.

Ezechias came to the throne of Juda as the successor of his wicked father Achaz. "He did that which was good before the Lord, according to all that David his father had done. He destroyed the high places, and broke the statues in pieces, and cut down the groves, and broke the brazen serpent which Moses had made; for, till that time, the children of Israel burnt incense to it; and he called its name Nohestan (*a little brass*)."

Ezechias set himself resolutely to the task of rectifying the abuses of Achaz. The doors of the Temple he caused to be re-opened and repaired; then assembling the priests and the Levites, he bade them

be sanctified that they might purify the House of God. When all was ready, the ancient ceremonies were restored, and the king sent messengers to both Israel and Juda to proclaim: "Ye children, turn again to the Lord, and He will return to the remnant of you that have escaped the hand of the king of the Assyrians. Serve the Lord, the God of your fathers, and the wrath of His indignation shall be turned from you."

Throughout Juda the response was general, but the greater part of the other tribes derided the messengers. The feast of the Passover was celebrated with great solemnity, and was prolonged this year from seven to fourteen days.

Ezechias took advantage of this outburst of religious fervour to urge the people to abolish every vestige of idolatry still to be found in the land. Thus, seeking to do the Will of God with all his heart, he did it and prospered. He inflicted severe punishments on the Philistines, and refused the annual tribute which Achaz had promised to the Assyrians.

In the fourteenth year of his reign the Assyrian forces, under Sennacherib, were directed against Juda. One by one the fenced cities of Juda fell before the Assyrian, until Ezechias, alarmed for the safety of Jerusalem, offered to submit to him. As the price of withdrawal Sennacherib demanded 300 talents* of silver and 30 talents of gold, which sum so taxed the resources of Juda that the king was compelled to strip the gates and pillars of the Temple of all the plates of gold with which they were adorned.

This was but a lull in the storm. Some two years later Sennacherib, while laying siege to Lachis, sent three of his officers with a strong force to demand the instant surrender of Jerusalem. Their message was couched in these insulting words: "Dost thou trust in Egypt, a staff of a broken reed? But if you say to me: We trust in the Lord our God; is it not He whose high places and altars Ezechias hath taken away? Is it without the will of the Lord that I am come up to this place to destroy it?" "Let not Ezechias deceive you," cried one of the messengers to those who stood upon the wall; "neither let him make you trust in the Lord. Have any of the gods of the nations delivered their land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Have they delivered Samaria?"

Ezechias sought comfort in prayer in the House of God. He also sent to the prophet Isaias, to whose prayers he recommended his kingdom, and whose counsel he sought in his great trial. "Be not afraid," he said, "of the words which thou hast heard. Behold, saith the Lord, I will send a spirit upon the king of the Assyrians, and he shall bear a message, and shall return into his own country, and I will there make him fall by the sword."

Sennacherib, hearing that the king of Ethiopia was marching against him, in haste despatched another letter to Ezechias, requiring the immediate surrender of the city. Again Ezechias prayed: "Save

* A talent of silver = £400; of gold = £6,000.

us, O Lord, from the hand of Sennacherib, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord, the only God."

Isaias was sent a second time to the king to assure him that God Himself would protect Jerusalem, and that Sennacherib should return by the way he had come.

That same night the angel of the Lord passed through the camp of the Assyrians and slew 185,000 men. When Sennacherib arose in the morning, he was filled with alarm at beholding so many dead covering the ground; and collecting what troops remained, he withdrew in haste for his capital. While he was in the act of offering sacrifice to his god Nesroch, he was slain by his own sons.

Another severe trial befell Ezechias. He was seized with so dangerous an illness that his life was despaired of, and Isaias warned him to set his affairs in order. The king besought the Lord not to cut him off, but to prolong his life.

His prayer was heard. Hardly had Isaias left the palace when the word of God came to him bidding him inform the king that fifteen years should be added to his life, and that in three days he should go up to the Temple. On the king's asking for a sign, Isaias proposed: "Wilt thou that the shadow on the dial of Achaz go forward ten lines, or that it go back so many degrees?" Ezechias chose the latter sign, and at the prophet's prayer the shadow went back ten degrees from the point to which it had already reached. Isaias then placed some dried figs on the sore from which the king suffered, and the disorder was miraculously removed.

To congratulate Ezechias on his recovery an embassy bearing letters and rich presents arrived from the king of Babylon. Rejoiced at being honoured by so great a prince, Ezechias took a vain delight in showing the ambassadors all the treasures of the royal palace, and the gold and silver vessels of the Temple. For this Isaias rebuked him, and foretold that the time was near when these same treasures should be carried away into Babylon, and when his sons should become servants in the court of the Babylonian king.

The remainder of the reign of Ezechias was passed in peace and prosperity. On his death he was succeeded by his son Manasses (4 Kings xviii.-xx.; 2 Par. xxix.-xxxii.).

CHAPTER CXVII

JUDA—MANASSES AND AMON

THE reign of MANASSES, which lasted fifty-five years, is the longest recorded in the annals of Juda. This king not only undid what his father had done towards restoring the worship of God and putting down idolatry, but even surpassed the wickedness of Achaz, and introduced every form of idol-worship practised by the surrounding nations: "he adored all the hosts of heaven and served them." To his false gods he set up altars in the courts of the Temple, and the Ark itself was taken away to make room for the idol of the impure

deity Astarte. " He wrought many evils before the Lord to provoke His anger."

God, through His prophets, pronounced this terrible doom against Juda: " I will bring evil upon Jerusalem and Juda, that whosoever shall hear of them, both his ears shall tingle; and I will efface Jerusalem as writings upon tablets are wont to be effaced, and I will erase it and turn it, and draw the pencil often over the face thereof."

To these threats of Divine vengeance the king not only turned a deaf ear, but even waged so violent a persecution against God's messengers that the streets of Jerusalem flowed with innocent blood. Tradition informs us that, in his mad rage, he had the aged and saintly Isaias put to death by causing him, for his greater torment, to be sawn in two with a wooden saw.

His punishment, however, was soon to fall upon him. The Assyrians, having invaded Juda, took him prisoner, and carried him off bound in chains to Babylon. Brought at length to reflect on his guilty life, in deep humility he now called upon the Lord to pity him in his distress and to pardon his transgressions. His repentance was sincere; and God, moved to compassion by his earnest prayer, not only forgave him, but restored him to his kingdom.

Manasses' first care after returning to Jerusalem was to repair, as far as possible, the evils which he had brought upon his kingdom, and to restore the worship of the true God. He died in peace and was succeeded by his son Amon.

Amon reigned but two years. He followed the former bad example of his father, but failed to imitate him in his repentance. He was cut off in his wickedness by one of his servants, who slew him. His son Josias succeeded him (4 Kings xxi.; 2 Par. xxxiii.).

CHAPTER CXVIII

THE STORY OF JUDITH

The transactions related in the Book of Judith belong probably to the time of the captivity of Manasses. At this time Holofernes with a vast army was sweeping westward, bent on conquering all the nations that lay in his path, and bringing them into subjection to his master, the Assyrian king.

The Jews, fearing that Holofernes might do to Jerusalem and the Temple what he had done to other cities and temples, set to work to strengthen their fortifications and to gather corn and provisions into all their cities. Nor did they trust to themselves alone, but put on sackcloth as a sign of penance, and with prayer and fasting begged of God with all their heart that He would visit His people.

When Holofernes heard that they were making preparations to resist his advance, he was transported with fury, and inquired who these people were that dared to oppose his will. Thereupon Achior, an Ammonite general in the Assyrian army, sketched for him the history of the Jewish nation from the earliest times, and told him of the power of their God and of His wonderful protection of them when

they remained faithful to Him. Holofernes was so enraged that he was on the point of slaying Achior for his presumption, but instead of putting him to death on the spot he loaded him with chains and conveyed him to Bethulia, there to await his doom with the rest of the inhabitants when the city should fall.

The Bethulians were filled with astonishment when Achior was brought into their midst, but learning from his own lips the cause of his being thus sent to them in fetters, they comforted him, saying: "The God of our fathers, whose power thou hast set forth, will make this return to thee, that thou shalt see the destruction of the Assyrians. And when the Lord our God shall give this liberty to His servants, let God be with thee also in the midst of us."

Now Bethulia was a strong fortress situated some seven miles to the north-east of Samaria. Owing to the strength of its position Holofernes led against it a vast army, and proceeded at once to lay siege to it. The sooner to bring about the surrender of the city the Assyrians cut the aqueduct, and the inhabitants were soon reduced to the most desperate straits. The cisterns soon began to fail, and only a small pittance of water was daily measured out to the people, whose courage at length gave way to despair. On every side murmurs were heard. The people even blamed their leaders as being the cause of their distress in not having from the first yielded to the demands of Holofernes. Ozias, who was in command of the town, tried to raise their drooping spirits, and promised that, if at the end of five days succour were not forthcoming, he would comply with their demand and surrender to Holofernes. It was at this critical moment that Judith appeared on the scene (Judith i.-vii.).

CHAPTER CXIX

THE STORY OF JUDITH (*Concluded*)

JUDITH was a holy widow who, from the time of her husband's death, had lived in the strictest retirement, and spent her hours in penance and prayer. She was a woman of great wealth and beauty, and her virtue was such that no one could speak an ill word against her.

When it became known to Judith that Ozias had consented to give up the city if, within five days, there came no help to them from the Lord, she said to the chief elders: "Who are you that tempt the Lord? This is not a word that may draw down mercy, but rather may stir up wrath and kindle indignation. You have set a time to the mercy of the Lord, and you have appointed Him a day according to your pleasure. Rather let us humble our souls before Him, and let us ask Him with tears, that according to His will so He will show mercy to us." She told them that she had formed a plan by which she hoped to be able to deliver the city, and begged them to pray that God might strengthen her design. She then dismissed them.

After praying for success on her undertaking Judith laid aside her widow's garments, and adorned herself in her richest apparel.

She next directed her steps towards the city gates in company with her maid, and was allowed to pass out without being questioned.

Descending the hill at daybreak, she was stopped by the Assyrian guard and conducted to the tent of Holofernes, who received her with much kindness and courtesy, and bade her declare the object of her coming. She answered: "God is so offended that He hath sent word by His prophets to the people that He will deliver them up for their sins; and I, thy handmaid, knowing this, am fled from them." Her words pleased Holofernes, who gave her permission to go in and out at will for three days, and allotted her a tent for herself and her maid.

On the fourth day Holofernes made a great feast for his officers, and invited Judith also to be present. She accordingly decked herself out in her most costly attire and proceeded to the banquet. Holofernes gave himself up to the pleasures of the feast, and drank so deeply of wine that, when night came on, he had no sooner cast himself down upon his couch than he fell into a heavy sleep. The officers withdrew from his tent, and Judith and her maid alone remained.

Bidding the maid stand without and watch, Judith prayed earnestly, and with many tears besought God to strengthen her arm. She then rose from her knees, and advancing to the bed where lay the unconscious Holofernes, drew his sword from the scabbard, took him by the hair, and with two strokes cut off his head. Tearing down the hangings of the bed, she wrapped up the bleeding head and gave it to her maid to put in her wallet. Unchallenged, they passed through the camp as if to go and pray in the Vale of Bethulia, according to their custom on previous nights, but they tarried not till they stood before the city gate. Calling to the watchman on the wall to open to her, Judith exclaimed: "God, who hath shown His power in Israel, is with us."

No sooner was it known in the city that Judith was again in their midst than the inhabitants, both young and old, flocked to meet her, for they had abandoned all hope of her return. Judith said to them: "Praise ye the Lord our God, who hath not forsaken them that hope in Him. And by me, His handmaid, He hath fulfilled His mercy which He promised to the house of Israel; and He hath killed the enemy of His people by my hand this night." She then held up before them the head of Holofernes, and called upon them to give thanks to God for the victory He had granted them through her.

Achior, the Ammonite, when he beheld the cruel tyrant's head, fell down at the feet of Judith, abandoned his idolatry, and became an earnest and faithful convert to the true religion.

At daybreak the men of Bethulia seized their arms, and with loud shouting hastened in the direction of the Assyrian camp. Astonished at seeing the Bethulians issuing from the town, the Assyrians ran to their general's tent and called to the chamberlains: "Go in and awake him, for the mice, coming out of their holes, have presumed to challenge us to fight." The chief attendant stood for a time before

the curtains clapping his hands, but not receiving a reply, he ventured to draw them aside, when lo! he beheld the headless trunk of Holofernes weltering in blood. With a loud wail he rushed from the tent, crying that Holofernes had been slain and his head severed from his body.

Fear seized upon the Assyrians, and in the most helpless confusion they rushed this way and that. They sought safety in flight, but were pursued and slain without mercy. So great was the booty taken that from it all the people of Bethulia were made rich, thirty days being scarcely sufficient for gathering it up.

Judith, although her fame had gone through all the land, withdrew to her own house, and setting her servant free, spent the rest of her days in retirement and prayer. It was only on festival days that she appeared in public. When at length she died, at a very advanced age, she was mourned by all the people for seven days (Judith viii.-xvi.).

CHAPTER CXX

JUDA—REIGN OF JOSIAS

THE three most excellent kings of Juda were David, Ezechias, and Josias, the son and successor of the wicked Amon. The reign of Josias was marked throughout for his zeal in God's service. He destroyed every vestige of idolatry in his kingdom, and restored in all its fulness the ancient ceremonial ritual of Moses. "He walked in all the ways of David: he turned not aside to the right hand nor to the left." It was of him the "disobedient prophet" spoke in the days of Jeroboam I.: "O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord God: Behold a child shall be born to the house of David, Josias by name, and he shall immolate upon thee the priests of the high places . . . and he shall burn men's bones upon thee" (3 Kings xiii. 2). This prophecy was fulfilled to the letter.

Josias destroyed the high places and the groves, removed the idols and the graven images, demolished the altars of Baal and the idols that had been set upon them, and strewed the fragments on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. And when he saw on the mount the sepulchres of the priests who had sacrificed to the golden calf of Jeroboam, he gave orders for their bones to be dug up and to be burnt upon the altar.

The king's next concern was for the Temple. The sacred building had long been neglected, and Josias proceeded to carry out extensive repairs at a great cost. While the work was in progress Helcias, the High Priest, discovered the Book of the Law (Deuteronomy), which probably had been hidden in some secret recess. The very handwriting of Moses, containing the record of the covenant which had once been placed in or beside the Ark, was now happily recovered. Josias had it read aloud in his presence, and was deeply impressed by the dreadful punishments with which it threatened all who should presume to depart from the Law. He addressed himself

to the prophetess Holda, who said to him in the name of the Lord: "Behold, I will bring evils upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, because they have forsaken Me, and have sacrificed to strange gods. But forasmuch as thou hast heard the words of the Book, and thou hast humbled thyself before Me, I also have heard thee, saith the Lord. Therefore thou shalt be gathered to thy sepulchre in peace that thy eyes may not see all the evils which I will bring upon this place."

The king ordered an assembly of all the ancients in the Temple, where, in the hearing of all, he read the words of the Book of the Covenant. This done, he returned to the assembled people, and with them made a solemn covenant always to walk in the way of the Lord with all their heart and with all their soul. Next was celebrated the Feast of the Passover with all the ceremonies enjoined in the sacred Book.

Some thirteen years after this, Josias with an army marched out to Mageddo, bent on opposing Nechao, king of Egypt, who was determined to pass through the territory of Juda in his war against the Assyrians. The tide of battle turned against Josias, who had to be borne from the field mortally wounded. Soon afterwards he died at Jerusalem, and his loss was universally mourned (4 Kings xxii., xxiii.; 2 Par. xxxiv., xxxv.).

CHAPTER CXXI

JUDA—JOACHAZ TO SEDECIAS

The Destruction of Jerusalem, B.C. 588.

On the death of Josias the people chose as his successor Joachaz, his second son. Joachaz went out against the king of Egypt as the latter was returning from his Assyrian expedition, but was defeated and taken prisoner at Rebla. Nechao treated his captive with great severity, and sent him into Egypt to die in chains after he had set his brother Eliacim on the throne of Juda.

Eliacim, or Joakim, imitated the wickedness of so many of his ancestors. His character was marked by avarice and cruelty. In a solemn assembly of the people the prophecies of Jeremias had been read aloud, and as they were reported to contain threats of the Divine vengeance against Juda and against the king, Joakim had the volume read to him; but so angry did he become on hearing the contents that he cut the scroll in pieces and cast them into the fire. Only by concealing themselves did Jeremias and his disciple Baruch escape the vengeance of the enraged king. In his retirement, however, Jeremias was commanded by God to take another scroll, on which he was to write the self-same words, and to add to them new threats against Juda and the king.

God's punishments were to fall quickly on Joakim and his guilty people. Nabuchodonosor, returning from a campaign against Egypt, laid siege to Jerusalem and took it. He carried off many of the sacred vessels from the Temple, and led with him to Babylon

many of the principal youths of Juda, among them being Daniel and his three friends, Ananias, Misael, and Azarias. The king himself was made prisoner and put into fetters, but was afterwards released and reinstated on the throne as a vassal of the Babylonian sovereign. After three years he rebelled and made an ineffectual effort to cast off the odious yoke, and Juda for a time was harassed by pillage and plunder.

At length the king of Babylon was able to take the field in person. Being admitted into Jerusalem, he slew, according to the historian Josephus, all who were in the flower of their age and such as were of the greatest dignity, together with the king, whom he commanded to be thrown before the walls without burial.

JOACHIN, the son and successor of the late king, had reigned but some three months when he was dethroned by Nabuchodonosor and carried off in chains to Babylon. His mother, his wife and children, and the princes and captains of his army, were made to share his captivity. The strong men, too, and all that were fit for war, and all the skilled artisans, were carried off, there being none left behind but the poorest in the land. The king's palace was plundered, the Temple was rifled of what treasures it still possessed, and the sacred vessels of the sanctuary were either broken in pieces or conveyed to Babylon to be placed in the temple of Bel.

Joachin was kept in close confinement for thirty-six years; but when Evilmerodach came to the throne, he released him and treated him with marked respect, even assigning him in the royal presence a throne above all the other captive kings.

Before Nabuchodonosor left Jerusalem, he placed on the throne of Juda, SEDECIAS, the third son of Josias and uncle of Joachin. Sedecias reigned down to the destruction of Jerusalem. Later he sought the alliance of Egypt and threw off his allegiance to Babylon. Led on by his wicked example, the majority of the people plunged headlong into every kind of abomination, until at last God's wrath was kindled against His people.

Nabuchodonosor with a powerful army laid siege to Jerusalem; but after the siege had lasted sixteen months, he was compelled to draw off his army for the purpose of giving battle to the Egyptians who were marching to the relief of the city. No sooner did it become known in Jerusalem that he had raised the siege than the hearts of all were filled with joy to think that now at length their cruel privations and sufferings were ended.

But their exultation was to be but short-lived. Soon the army of Nabuchodonosor returned, and the siege was resumed with renewed vigour. Secretly sending for Jeremias, whom he had imprisoned, Sedecias asked him: "Is there, thinkest thou, any word from the Lord?" "There is," answered the prophet; "thou shalt be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon." The king sent Jeremias back to his prison, but gave orders for him to be treated with respect and to have his personal wants attended to as long as any food remained in the city.

The siege had lasted two and a half years when a breach was made in the wall, and the city was carried by a vigorous assault. In the confusion which followed, Sedecias, with a handful of men, escaped by the gate of the royal palace, and fled with all speed in the direction of Jericho, but was captured and brought before his conqueror.

Terrible vengeance was wreaked upon the unhappy prisoner for his treachery. After undergoing the awful agony of beholding the slaughter of his own children, he was sentenced to have his eyes plucked out, and to remain a prisoner in Babylon till his death. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremias: " Thine eyes shall behold the king of Babylon, and thou shalt speak with him " (Jer. xxxiv. 3); and that of Ezechiel, who informed him that he should not *see* Babylon though he should *die* there.

The city was given up to pillage; everything of value belonging to the inhabitants was torn from them; the Temple, the king's palace, and the houses of the wealthy were set on fire, and their walls levelled with the ground. Those who escaped the sword were carried off to Babylon, and none were allowed to remain in Juda except the vinedressers and a few husbandmen to cultivate the land. What a fall for the once glorious city ! She had kindled God's wrath against her, " and there was no remedy " (4 Kings xxiii.-xxv.; 2 Par. xxxvi.).

CHAPTER CXXII

CONCLUSION OF THE HISTORY OF JUDA

NABUZARDAN, to whom Nabuchodonosor had entrusted the last act of destruction, did not leave the land in a state of anarchy, but appointed Godolias governor over those that were left and assigned Maspha as his residence. Out of respect for Jeremias he struck off his fetters, and gave him his choice either to accompany the captives to Babylon or to remain behind in his own country. The prophet chose to remain, and went among the scanty remnant of Juda, ministering to their wants, and by his words encouraging them to submit patiently to their sad lot.

Seeing Jerusalem changed into a desert, he sat down, and with a heart torn with grief, in this lamentation bemoaned the once beautiful city: " How doth the city sit solitary that was once full of people ! How is the mistress of the Gentiles become as a widow ! Weeping she hath wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks. There is none to comfort her among all them that were dear to her: all her friends have despised her and are become her enemies. The ways of Sion mourn because there are none that come to the solemn feast; all her gates are broken down; her priests sigh; her virgins are in affliction, and she is oppressed with bitterness. Her adversaries are become her lords, her enemies are enriched, because the Lord hath spoken against her for the multitude of her iniquities. O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow. My eyes run down with water because the comforter, the relief of my soul, is far from me: my children are desolate be-

cause the enemy hath prevailed. The Lord is my portion, said my soul: therefore will I wait for Him. The Lord is good to them that hope in Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. It is good to wait with silence for the salvation of God. Why wilt Thou forget us for ever? Why wilt Thou forsake us for a long time? Convert us, O Lord, and we shall be converted: renew our days as from the beginning."

For a time all went well. Godolias showed marked kindness to the people entrusted to his care, and many Jews who had fled from Sedecias came out of their retreat and placed themselves under his protection. Among them was Ismael, of the blood royal, who envied the dignity of the governor and resolved on his destruction. Godolias was informed of his danger, but paid no heed to the warning. Having the greatest confidence in Ismael, he even invited him to sup with him. Towards the close of the feast, however, Ismael and a few chosen companions suddenly set upon Godolias and slew him, together with his attendants. The murderers fled into the country of the Ammonites, and the rest of the Jews, dreading the vengeance of Nabuchodonosor, resolved to abandon their country and take refuge in Egypt.

In vain Jeremias tried to allay their fears, and promised them that no harm should come to them. He told them that, if they persisted in their determination to go into Egypt, the sword which they dreaded should overtake them there, and that those who escaped the sword should perish by famine and pestilence. "Thou liest," they exclaimed; "the Lord our God hath not sent thee, saying: Go not into Egypt to dwell there." Thus, heedless of the prophet's warning, men, women, and children, together with Jeremias and Baruch, who had returned from Babylon, fled into Egypt (4 Kings xxv.; 2 Par. xxxvi.; Jer. xl.-xliii.).

CHAPTER CXXIII

JEREMIAS AND HIS DISCIPLE BARUCH

It is probably owing to the greater extent of their prophetical writings that Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, and Daniel, have been styled the Four Greater Prophets.

Jeremias was born in the land of Benjamin, and even before his birth God had sanctified him and set him apart for the great office he was afterwards to fulfil. When God made known to him the great work He had in store for him, he humbly declared: "Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am but a child." God said to him: "Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee; and whatsoever I shall command thee, thou shalt speak. Behold I have given My words in thy mouth."

Unceasingly did he warn the people of Juda of the evils they were preparing for themselves by their wickedness. He announced to them the coming destruction of Jerusalem, and for his reproaches was cast into prison. He foretold the seventy years' captivity in Babylon, as well as the restoration of the Jews who had been carried

away captive with Joachin, and the desolation of those who were left behind. For his outspokenness he was let down into a deep well in which was no water but much mire. He would soon have been smothered had not the king given orders for him to be drawn up again.

In Machabees (2 ii.) we read how Jeremias hid the Ark at the time of the Captivity. By God's command he ordered the Tabernacle and the Ark to be taken with him to Mount Nebo, where, without making known the spot even to his followers, he hid them and the Altar of Incense in a cave, the entrance of which he closed up. "The spot," he said, "shall be unknown till God gather together the congregation of the people, and receive them to mercy."

Moreover, in the first chapter of the same book, we are told that, at the time of the Captivity, some of the priests secretly took the sacred fire from the altar and hid it in a deep well in which there was no water. When many years had passed, Nehemias was sent with a number of priests to seek the fire, and coming to the very well, they found no fire in it, but thick water. This they drew up, and with it sprinkled the victims and the wood on which they were laid. For a time the sun had been hidden by a cloud; but when at length its rays fell upon the altar, the holocaust was immediately set on fire, and all were amazed. The water that was left Nehemias commanded to be poured upon the great stones and a flame arose, but this was consumed by the light which shone from the altar.

Jeremias was a special figure of Jesus Christ in the persecutions that he underwent, in his charity for his persecutors, and in the violent death which he suffered at their hands; for there is an ancient tradition that he was stoned to death at Taphnes by the remnant of the Jews who had withdrawn into Egypt. By the special command of God he never married and was therefore a priest, prophet, virgin, and martyr.

Baruch, the faithful attendant and secretary of Jeremias, was distinguished for his noble birth and for his skill in the law. So intimately did he share in the labours of his master that the ancient Fathers have considered the prophecy which bears his name, and which he wrote from Babylon, as a part of the prophecy of Jeremias; for which reason Baruch is ranked neither in the class of the four Greater nor in that of the twelve Minor Prophets.

CHAPTER CXXIV

THE PROPHET EZECHIEL

Among the captives that were carried away to Babylon with King Joachin was Ezechiel, a man of the priestly race and a contemporary of Jeremias. As Jeremias prophesied in Jerusalem so did Ezechiel prophesy to the same effect in Babylon. He also is said to have ended his days by martyrdom.

In his parable of the cedar-twig we have a promise of Christ and His Church, the *cedar* being the royal stock of David, and the *twig*

Jesus Christ, whom God has planted on Mount Sion, the high mountain of His Church to which all nations flow: " I Myself will take of the marrow of the high cedar, saith the Lord God, and I will set it. I will crop off a tender twig from the top of the branches thereof, and I will plant it on a mountain high and eminent. On the high mountains of Israel will I plant it, and it shall shoot forth into branches and shall bear fruit, and it shall become a great cedar; and all birds shall dwell under it, and every fowl shall make its nest under the shadow of the branches thereof " (Ezech. xvii. 22, 23).

He describes the destruction of Jerusalem and how Babylon, the destroyer of others, shall itself be destroyed. Evil pastors he reproves, and foretells Christ, the true Pastor: " Woe to the shepherds of Israel that feed themselves. Should not the flocks be fed by the shepherds? Behold, I Myself will come upon the shepherds; I will require My flock at their hands, and I will cause them to cease from feeding the flock any more. AND I WILL SET UP ONE SHEPHERD OVER THEM, and He shall feed them " (Ezech. xxxiv.).

In the vision of dry bones he not only foreshadows the deliverance of the people from captivity, but the great mystery of the Resurrection as well. Ezechiel was set down by the Spirit of the Lord in the midst of a plain full of dry bones, and he was commanded to address them thus: " Hear the word of God: Behold I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to grow over you, and will cover you with skin: I will send spirit into you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord."

As the prophet spoke, a noise was heard and a great commotion as the bones came together, each one to its joint. Sinews and flesh covered them, and the skin was stretched over them, but as yet there was no life in them. God then bade Ezechiel prophesy and say: " Come, spirit, from the four winds, and blow upon these slain, and let them live again." No sooner had the prophet pronounced the words than those who had been dead stood upon their feet, a mighty army.

The interpretation of the vision was also given to Ezechiel. The bones represented the Jewish people exclaiming in their grief: " Our bones are dried, our hope is lost, and we are cut off." Yet God promises to restore His people, and through the mouth of the prophet addresses to them these consoling words: " Behold I will open your graves, and will bring you out of your sepulchres, O my people, and will bring you into the land of Israel. I will make you rest upon your own land."

CHAPTER CXXV

THE PROPHET DANIEL—STORY OF SUSANNA

THE national existence of the Ten Tribes was lost completely, and we hear no more of them; but the remnant of Juda and Benjamin remained among the conquerors a separate people, maintained their own religion, and, as far as possible, their own customs and political institutions.

Among the captives led into Babylon were, as we have already seen, Daniel and his three companions, Ananias, Misael, and Azarias. Malasar, to whom the special training of these four youths was entrusted by Nabuchodonosor, was ordered to show them every kindness, and to give them meat and wine from the king's own table. At court they were known as Baltassar, Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago respectively.

Resolved not to defile themselves by eating meat forbidden by the Law, Daniel desired that he and his companions might be allowed to abstain also from wine, and that they might be given only pulse for food. He begged Malasar to give them, by way of trial, this simple fare for ten days, and then to compare their condition with that of the other youths who had received their food from the king's table. Their request was granted ; and after ten days the four friends looked fairer and more healthy than ever they had done before. Consequently Malasar allowed the diet to be continued.

Daniel was only twelve years old when he confounded Susanna's accusers. Now Susanna was married to a rich Jew named Joakim, and was noted for her beauty and virtue. Joakim's house was the resort of many of the Jews, and there people were accustomed to assemble to have their disputes legally settled by two of the elders who were appointed annually as judges.

When the people had departed at noon, Susanna was in the habit of walking in the cool shade of her husband's orchard. The two elders, struck with her surpassing beauty, allowed their evil desires to get the better of them, and each, without knowing the dark purpose of the other, sought an opportunity of carrying into effect the wickedness on which his heart was set.

One day, meeting by accident at the gate of the orchard, they became confused, but acknowledged their intentions to each other and formed a plan by which they might entrap her. They entered stealthily, and concealed themselves till she should come for her mid-day walk.

Soon they heard her footsteps, and hastened to pour their foul suggestions into her chaste ear. At the same time they threatened that, if she refused to consent to their proposals, they would accuse her of adultery, and swear that they themselves had surprised her in the act.

Amazed and terrified, Susanna called aloud for help; but the elders also cried out against her. The servants hurried to their mistress, but when they heard what things the elders alleged against her, they hung their heads for shame, " for never had there been any such word said against Susanna." The following day she was put on her trial before the people.

Susanna stood grief-stricken, yet beautiful to behold. A most plausible story was invented against her, and on this evidence she was condemned to death. With a loud voice she cried out: " O Eternal God, who knowest hidden things, Thou knowest that they have borne false witness against me; and behold I must die, whereas

I have done none of the things which these men have maliciously forged against me." She was then led out to be stoned to death.

As she was being conducted, followed by the whole multitude, to the place of execution, suddenly a voice was heard exclaiming: "I am innocent of the blood of this woman. Return to judgment, for they have borne false witness against her." It was the voice of Daniel, who had been inspired to speak thus. The people turned towards him in amazement, and hastened back to the place of judgment.

When the two elders, at Daniel's request, had been taken apart, he asked each of them separately under what kind of tree he had seen the crime committed. One of them said under a mastic-tree, whereas the other affirmed that it was under a holm-tree, thus contradicting each other. Then did the whole assembly cry out with a loud voice and bless God for thus wonderfully saving the innocent Susanna who had put her trust in Him. The two elders were led away and put to the same death to which they themselves had doomed their helpless victim. Daniel's fame was noised abroad, and he became great before all the people (Dan. i., xiii.).

CHAPTER CXXVI

NABUCHODONOSOR'S DREAM

ANOTHER event which brought great distinction to Daniel was his interpretation of the king's dream. Nabuchodonosor had a dream which caused him great uneasiness of mind; yet, on awaking, he could not recall what the dream was about. Nevertheless he required his wise men not only to tell him his dream but its meaning as well. They said to him: "There is no man on earth who can accomplish thy word, O king; nor can anyone be found that can show it except the gods, whose conversation is not with men." The king flew into a rage, and ordered all the wise men of his kingdom to be put to death.

As this cruel order affected the lives of Daniel and his companions, Daniel earnestly besought God to reveal the mystery to him that they might not die. His prayer was granted; and when he was requested by the king to tell him what he knew, he spoke thus: "There is a God in heaven that revealeth mysteries, who hath shown to thee what is to come to pass in later times. Thou, O king, sawest as it were a great statue, and the look thereof was terrible. The head of this statue was of fine gold, the breast and arms were of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet part of iron and part of clay. Then thou sawest a stone, cut without hands out of a mountain, which struck the statue upon the feet and broke it into pieces: the pieces were scattered by the wind, but the stone which struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

"Now this is the interpretation of the dream: The head of gold is thyself; after thee shall rise up another kingdom, inferior to thine, of silver; this shall be followed by one of brass, which shall rule over all the world: and then shall come a fourth, of iron, which shall subdue

all things; but as the feet were part of iron and part of clay, therefore, shall this kingdom be partly strong and partly broken. Yet a fifth kingdom shall arise, set up by God Himself, a kingdom that shall break into pieces and consume all the other kingdoms, but itself shall stand for ever."

Struck with wonder at the wisdom of Daniel, the king bowed his head and said: "Verily your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of hidden things." He loaded Daniel with favours and appointed him governor over all the provinces of Babylon. Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago were placed over the works of the provinces of Babylon, but Daniel remained in the king's palace.

The different empires denoted by the metals were, as is generally thought: (1) *The Chaldean*, its king, Nabuchodonosor, being at that time the most powerful king in the world; (2) that of the *Medes and Pe sians*, later and of less duration and extent; (3) the *Macedonian Empire* of Alexander the Great; (4) *the Roman Empire*, which swallowed up all that Alexander had left to his generals. All these at length gave way to the kingdom raised up by God Himself, the kingdom of Jesus Christ in the Catholic Church, which cannot be destroyed, and which shall last for ever (Dan. ii.).

CHAPTER CXXVII

NABUCHODONOSOR'S GOLDEN STATUE—THE FIERY FURNACE.

Soon afterwards Nabuchodonosor caused a great statue plated with gold to be made and set up in the plain of Dura. To celebrate the dedication of it, all the chief men in the kingdom were invited to repair to the spot, and to fall down and adore the image. When all were assembled, the voice of a herald was heard commanding that, at the sound of music, every man should prostrate himself before the statue.

Ananias, Misael, and Azarias were also included in the summons; and as they failed to appear, they were at once reported to the king by the jealous Babylonian nobles. Daniel, however, on account of his exalted dignity, they did not dare to attack in this way.

Filled with anger, the king summoned to him the three youths and said to them: "Is it true that you do not worship my gods, nor adore the golden statue which I have set up? If you do not adore, you shall be cast that same hour into the furnace of burning fire; and who is the God that shall deliver you out of my hand?"

They answered: "Behold, O king, our God whom we worship is able to save us from the furnace of burning fire and to deliver us out of thy hands: we will not worship thy gods, nor adore the golden statue which thou hast set up."

Enraged at their boldness, Nabuchodonosor gave orders for the furnace to be heated seven times more than usual, and for the youths to be bound and cast, clad as they were, into the midst of the flames

So fierce was the fire that the men who cast them into it were seized by it and burnt to death, but the three youths rose up unhurt, praising and blessing God.

The king's servants fed the fire with pitch and dry wood, so that the flames mounting and spreading consumed such of the Chaldeans as had ventured to approach too near. But an angel of the Lord came down into the furnace and " made the midst of the flames like the blowing of a wind bringing dew, and the fire touched them not at all, nor troubled them, nor did them any harm." Their bonds being miraculously loosed, the three walked unscathed in the midst of the furnace, glorifying God in a beautiful canticle of praise, in which they called upon all the works of creation to unite with them in giving praise to the Most High God.

The king came to look into the furnace, and seeing what was done, exclaimed: " Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? Behold I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and there is no hurt in them, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." He then called them to come forth; and all were astonished to find that the fire had had no power over their bodies, their very garments even being unsinged.

Nabuchodonosor now issued this decree: " Every people, tribe, and tongue which shall speak blasphemy against the God of Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, shall be destroyed and their houses laid waste; for there is no other God that can save in this manner." He even conferred fresh honours upon the three youths (Dan. iii.).

CHAPTER CXXVIII

NABUCHODONOSOR'S HUMILIATION

AGAIN Nabuchodonosor had a dream which troubled him exceedingly and, as before, baffled his wise men and soothsayers. Calling Daniel to him, he said: " I saw a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was exceeding great, reaching unto heaven. Its branches extended even to the ends of the earth, its leaves were most beautiful, and its fruit exceeding much. Under it dwelt cattle and beasts, and in the branches thereof the fowls of the air had their abode, and all flesh did eat of it. And behold a watcher and a Holy One came down from heaven, crying out: Cut down the tree, and chop off the branches thereof: shake off its leaves, and scatter its fruits: let the beasts fly away that are under it, and the birds from its branches: but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, and let it be fastened with a band of iron and of brass among the grass, and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let its portion be with the wild beasts in the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given him, and let seven times pass over him."

For a full hour Daniel, foreseeing the great calamities that were soon to befall the king, remained in silent thought. At length, encouraged by the king to speak without fear, he answered: " The tree which thou sawest, high and strong, is thyself, O king, who art grown

great and become mighty. The words of the Holy One, whom thou didst see descending from above, express the sentence of the Most High which is to come upon my lord the king. Thou shalt be cast out from among men, and thy dwelling shall be with cattle and with wild beasts, and thou shalt eat grass as an ox, and shalt be wet with the dew of heaven; and seven times (*years*) shall pass over thee, till thou knowest that the Most High ruleth over the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will. But whereas He commanded that the stump of the tree should be left, thy kingdom shall remain to thee, after thou shalt have known that power is from heaven. Wherefore, O king, redeem thy sins with alms, and thy iniquities with works of mercy to the poor: perhaps He will forgive thy offences."

The king soon forgot the warning of Daniel. Only twelve months afterwards, as he was walking in his palace and vainly admiring the city which he had enlarged and beautified, he thus communed with himself: " Is not this the great Babylon which I have built to be the seat of the kingdom, by the strength of my power, and in the glory of my excellence ?"

But a voice from heaven was heard repeating the selfsame threat which Daniel had uttered a year before, and instantly Nabuchodonosor was struck by the hand of God, so that a strange madness seized him; and fleeing from the society of men, he sought the company of the beasts of the field. The heart of a beast was given him, and he ate grass like an ox; his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle, and his nails like the claws of birds.

When the seven years were ended his reason was restored to him, and, lifting up his eyes to heaven, he blessed the Most High, and praised Him that liveth for ever. Being restored to his kingdom, and convinced at length that all power was from God, he exclaimed: " Therefore I do now praise and magnify and glorify the King of heaven, because all his works are true, and His ways judgments; and them that walk in pride He is able to abase " (Dan. iv.).

CHAPTER CXXIX

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

NABUCHODONOSOR'S successor, Evilmerodach, showed especial kindness to the Jewish captives, and even released from his long confinement their king Joachin, whom he honoured above all the other royal captives.

The chief god of the Babylonians was Bel, to whom they offered daily twelve measures of flour, forty sheep, and sixty vessels of wine. Seeing that Daniel worshipped his own God, the king asked him why he did not worship Bel. Daniel answered: " I do not worship idols made with hands, but the living God who created heaven and earth and hath power over all flesh." " Doth not Bel," asked the king, " seem to thee to be a living god ? Seest thou not how much he eateth and drinketh every day ?" Daniel, smiling, replied:

"O king, be not deceived; for this is but clay within and brass without, neither hath he eaten at any time." Hereupon the king threatened to put his priests to death if they did not declare to him what became of the daily offerings; yet he promised them that the same should befall Daniel if they could show that it was really Bel who disposed of all these things.

In all there were seventy priests of Bel, and these, together with the king and Daniel, proceeded to the Temple. When the meats and wine had been set before Bel as usual, the priests said to the king: "Do thou, O king, shut fast the door, and seal it with thy own ring, and when thou comest in the morning, if thou findest not that Bel hath eaten up all, we will suffer death." Now the priests had made a secret passage, and an entrance under the table; and by night they came into the temple accompanied by their wives and children and disposed of the offerings.

All being ready, the priests retired; but before the king withdrew, Daniel caused the floor to be sprinkled over with fine ashes, after which the door was closed and sealed with the king's own ring.

Early the next morning the king, accompanied by Daniel, went to the temple; and when he opened the door and found the offerings gone, he exclaimed: "Great art thou, O Bel, and there is no deceit in thee."

Daniel laughed, and motioning the king to remain where he was, pointed to the floor, saying: "Behold the pavement; mark whose footprints these are." When he saw the footprints of men, women, and children in the ashes that Daniel had strewed, his anger knew no bounds, and he gave orders for the immediate execution of the priests, and for Bel to be given into the power of Daniel, who destroyed both it and the temple.

The Babylonians next took for their god a huge dragon and offered sacrifice to it. The king said to Daniel: "Behold thou canst not say now that this is not a living god; adore him therefore." Daniel answered: "I adore the Lord my God, for He is the living God; but this is no living god. Give me leave, O king, and I will kill this dragon without sword or club."

Permission being granted, Daniel took pitch, and fat, and hair, and rolled them together in the shape of balls. These he administered to the dragon, which eagerly swallowed them, and instantly burst asunder. Thereupon Daniel exclaimed: "Behold him whom you worship."

But the priests were enraged, and soon began to clamour for the death of Daniel. They even proceeded to the royal palace, openly accused the king of being a Jew himself, and threatened that, if he did not deliver Daniel into their hands, they would destroy both him and his house.

In the end the king, to save himself from the fury of the priests and people, was reluctantly compelled to surrender Daniel to them. They cast him into a den in which were seven fire celions which had purposely been kept for a time without food. But the lions,

losing their fierceness, came around him and made no attempt to injure him. In the hope that, by stress of hunger, the lions would yet be driven to destroy him, the Babylonians for fully six days threw nothing to them.

In the meantime Daniel's wants were provided for in a wondrous manner. There lived at this time in Judaea a prophet named Habacuc. Now one day when he had boiled some pottage, and had broken bread to carry into the field to the reapers, an angel appeared to him and bade him take the meal which he had prepared to Daniel, who was in the lions' den in Babylon.

Filled with wonder, Habacuc said to the angel: "Lord, I never saw Babylon, nor do I know the den." The angel then stretched out his hand, and taking Habacuc by the hair of the head, bore him through the air and set him down near the entrance to the lions' den. Here Habacuc called to Daniel: "Thou servant of God, take the dinner that God hath sent to thee." Again the angel took him up and carried him back to the place whence he had brought him.

Seven days after Daniel had been thrown to the lions, the king came to the den to bewail his death; but great was his joy on seeing him alive and unhurt, sitting in the midst of the lions. With deep emotion he cried out: "Great art thou, O Lord, the God of Daniel!" and at once he gave orders for the saintly prophet to be removed. Then, casting aside all fear, he caused those who had sought Daniel's life to be straightway seized and thrown into the den. The lions, no longer tame and docile, sprang upon the unhappy wretches and tore them to pieces (Dan. xiv.).

CHAPTER CXXX

BALTASSAR'S FEAST—DANIEL AGAIN CAST TO THE LIONS

At this time the Medes and Persians were extending their conquests and penetrated into Babylonia. They quickly marched on the capital and drove the inhabitants to seek the shelter of the walls. The defence of the city itself was left to Baltassar, son of Nabonidus, the last independent king of Babylon, who had associated his son with him in the kingdom.

Believing himself secure within the mighty walls of Babylon, Baltassar chose the occasion for giving a great feast to his nobles, to which he also invited his wives and the leading men of the state. As the feast advanced, and the wine began to mount to his brain, Baltassar ordered the sacred vessels taken from the Temple of Jerusalem to be brought in, that he and his guests might drink from them in honour of his gods.

For a time all went merrily, but suddenly the mirth and revel ceased when what seemed to be the hand of a man appeared writing on the wall immediately facing the king. Baltassar became pale through fear, his joints seemed loosened, and his knees knocked together. He promised that whosoever should make known to him

the interpretation of the writing should be ranked as the third man in the kingdom. But his promises availed him nothing.

At last someone thought of Daniel and requested the king to send for him. He did so, and promised him great rewards if he succeeded in interpreting the mysterious words. Daniel said to him: "Thy rewards be to thyself, O king; but the writing I will read to thee, and show thee the interpretation thereof. Thou hast lifted thyself up against the Lord of Heaven, the vessels of His house thou hast brought before thee, and thou and thy nobles and thy wives have drunk wine in them. Thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold and brass, but God who hath thy breath in His hand thou hast not glorified; wherefore He hath set down the writing against thee. Now the meaning is this: *Mane*, God hath numbered thy kingdom and hath finished it; *Thecel*, thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting; *Phares*, thy kingdom is divided and is given to the Medes and Persians." Now although Daniel had foretold God's judgments against him, yet did the king honour him as he had promised.

The prophecy was soon to be fulfilled. That very night Cyrus, having diverted the waters of the Euphrates, entered the city by the river-bed, and put to the sword the astonished guards and all who dared to oppose him. In the confusion which followed, Baltassar himself was slain.

Cyrus, now master of Babylon, appointed as his viceroy Darius the Mede, who showed marked kindness to Daniel, and so far advanced him in power that he became an object of jealousy to the nobles. Thinking to entrap Daniel, they prevailed on Darius to issue a decree that whosoever should ask any petition of any god or man, except of Darius himself, for a period of thirty days, should be cast to the lions.

Daniel paid no heed to the edict, but thrice in the day, according to his custom, opened the window which looked towards Jerusalem and poured out his petitions to the God of his fathers. His actions were carefully noted by his enemies, who hastened to Darius, and demanded the death of Daniel. At the same time they reminded Darius that, by the law of the Medes and Persians, no decree which the king had made could be altered. Accordingly Daniel was again cast into the lions' den.

That night Darius's mind was troubled. He could neither eat nor sleep for thinking of Daniel. Early the next morning he went to the mouth of the den and sorrowfully called to Daniel: "Daniel, servant of the living God, hath thy God been able to deliver thee from the lions?" A voice responded from the recesses of the den: "O king, live for ever: my God hath sent His angel, and hath shut up the mouths of the lions, and they have not hurt me."

Without delay the king caused Daniel to be removed, and condemned his accusers, together with their wives and families, to take his place. Even before they reached the bottom of the den, they were seized and torn to pieces by the furious beasts.

Darius then issued this edict: " It is decreed by me that in all my Empire all men fear the God of Daniel, for He is the living and eternal God. He is the deliverer and saviour, doing signs and wonders in heaven and earth, who hath delivered Daniel out of the lions' den." Daniel is said to have lived at the court to the advanced age of 110 years (Dan. v., vi.).

Daniel wrote many things concerning the Messias, even naming the precise time when He should come upon the earth and suffer death. " As I was yet speaking in prayer," he writes, " behold a man, Gabriel, touched me and said: O Daniel, I am come forth to teach thee. *Seventy weeks** are shortened [*fixed*] upon the people and upon the holy city that vision and prophecy may be fulfilled, and the Saint of saints may be anointed.

" Know thou, therefore, that from the going forth of the word to build up Jerusalem again, unto Christ the Prince, there shall be *seven weeks* and *sixty-two weeks* . . . and after sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain, and the people that deny Him shall not be His. And a people with their leader that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war the appointed desolation."

* A week of years = seven years.

THE FIRST BOOK OF ESDRAS

This Book takes its name from the writer, who was a holy priest and doctor of the law.

PART VII

FROM THE END OF THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA

CHAPTER CXXXI

THE RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY, B.C. 536.

THE seventy years of captivity foretold by Jeremias had come and gone when Cyrus, King of the Persians, who on the death of Darius reigned as sole monarch at Babylon, issued an edict permitting all the Jews to return to their own country and rebuild the Temple. He also restored the sacred vessels carried off by Nabuchodonosor.

Only some 40,000, along with their servants, availed themselves of the opportunity thus afforded of settling once again in the land of Juda. These set out under the leadership of Zorobabel, grandson of King Joachin, and accompanied by Josue, the High Priest, they arrived at Jerusalem, where they erected an altar on which to offer the daily sacrifice till the Temple should be finished.

Soon after their return the Jews gathered together as one man in Jerusalem. Preparations for the rebuilding of the Temple were immediately set on foot; cedars were brought from Libanus by the Sidonians and the Tyrians; hewers of stone and masons were procured; Levites were appointed to hasten forward the work of the Lord; and in the second year after the return from captivity all was ready for the foundation ceremony.

While the stones of the foundations were being laid, a joyful hymn of praise and thanksgiving arose from the priests and the Levites, together with shouts of gladness from the people. Yet mingled with the cries of joy might have been detected a wail of sorrow, as the ancients who had seen the glory of Solomon's Temple wept aloud at the thought of its magnificence in comparison with what this second Temple promised to be. Thus, amid the different emotions of joy and sorrow, the ceremony was brought to a close.

The Samaritans, who were the descendants of the Cuthean colonists introduced into Samaria after the captivity of the Ten Tribes, asked to have a share in the work, but their request was refused. Filled with indignation, they sent an embassy to Babylon to have the work stopped, accusing the Jews of disloyal motives, and

so far succeeded in their object that, during the remainder of Cyrus's reign, and that of his two immediate successors, the building had to be discontinued.

Satisfied at length of the falsity of the accusations made against the Jews, Darius Hystaspes not only gave orders for the rebuilding of the Temple to be resumed, but himself contributed large sums for the completion of the work. Stimulated, too, by the encouraging words of the prophets Zacharias and Aggeus, the latter of whom foretold that the presence of the Messias in this new Temple would give it an exalted dignity, the Jews set about their undertaking with renewed energy; and in twenty years from its commencement the new Temple was finished and solemnly dedicated.

In the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, Esdras, a virtuous prince, left Babylon with a fresh band of 6,000 captives, and arrived in Jerusalem with authority to correct abuses, appoint magistrates and judges, and establish law and order in the state. Presents of gold and silver from the king and his counsellors were given him to be spent on the Temple, and many vessels for the services, besides money with which to buy victims for sacrifice.

Many abuses had already taken root in the sacred city, and these Esdras set himself vigorously to correct. Disregarding the law of Moses, many had intermarried with the idolatrous inhabitants of the country. They were moved to repentance by the words of Esdras, and all who had taken strange wives confessed their guilt, and promised to sever for ever the unlawful connections (1 Esdras i.-x.).

CHAPTER CXXXII

THE STORY OF ESTHER

The history of Esther, contained in the Book which bears her name, takes us back to the reign of Assuerus, the Xerxes of Greek history, who mounted the Persian throne B.C. 486, having the city of Susan as his capital.

When Assuerus, who had divorced his queen Vasthi, wished to choose another wife, among the maidens brought before him was a beautiful Jewish virgin named Edissa or Esther, whose parents were dead, and who had lived as the adopted daughter of her uncle Mardochai. Esther's grace and beauty won the heart of the king, who set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vasthi.

On one occasion Mardochai was posted at the palace gates when he discovered a plot formed by two of the king's officers to assassinate their royal master. Mardochai promptly disclosed the matter to Esther, who in turn warned the king of his impending danger. The conspirators were put to death, and a record of Mardochai's services was entered in the annals of the kingdom.

About this time Assuerus had raised to great power and dignity a man named Aman, and had commanded all his servants to bend the knee to him. Now when Aman found that Mardochai alone refused to pay him such abject homage, he was moved with feelings of the

bitterest hatred against him, and resolved at once on his destruction and on that of all the Jews still left in the king's dominions.

Aman represented to the king that the Jews were a people dangerous to the state, who, having their own laws and ceremonies, despised the royal ordinances. He even sought and obtained permission to act towards them as he pleased. Accordingly he issued a decree, bearing the king's seal, that on a certain day, which he had chosen by lot, all the Jewish exiles scattered through the Persian dominions should be mercilessly slaughtered. With prayer and fasting the Jews besought God not to abandon them in their need.

As the day for carrying out Aman's barbarous decree drew near, Mardochai, in sackcloth and ashes, went about the city sorrowing and lamenting. Word of this coming to Esther's ear, she made inquiries as to its cause. Mardochai told her messenger all that had happened, and at the same time sent her a copy of the edict.

Now there was a law that anyone coming unbidden into the king's presence should at once be put to death unless the king extended to him his golden sceptre in token of mercy. Knowing that, if she neglected to act immediately, the lives of her people must be sacrificed, Esther determined to brave the law.

Clad in her royal apparel and accompanied by two of her maids, she sought the presence of the king. She passed on through the many doors that led to the inner court of the palace till she stood before Assuerus, whom she found seated upon his throne, his royal robes all glittering with gold and precious stones. Beholding him thus, she was filled with terror; and when she saw his eyes kindle with anger, all colour left her cheeks and she stumbled forward in a swoon.

In a moment the king's countenance softened. He stepped quickly from his throne, and holding her up in his arms till she came to herself, caressed her and said: "What is the matter, Esther? I am thy brother; fear not, thou shalt not die: this law is not for thee, but for all others. Come near, then, and touch the sceptre." Not receiving any reply, he became more concerned, and laying the sceptre on her neck, kissed her, asking anxiously: "Why dost thou not speak to me?"

At length Esther recovered somewhat, and feebly replied: "I saw thee, my lord, as an angel of God, and my heart was troubled for fear of thy majesty." Hardly had she uttered these words when a second time she fell down fainting. Much distressed, the king called to her: "What wilt thou then, Queen Esther? What is thy request? If thou shouldst ask even one-half of the kingdom, it shall be given to thee." Esther murmured: "If it please the king, I beseech thee to come to me this day, and Aman with thee, to the banquet which I have prepared." This the king gladly promised to do, and forthwith sent for Aman to accompany him.

At the banquet the king showed great kindness to Esther, and renewed the promise he had made to her to grant her request. "My petition," she said, "is this: let the king and Aman come again to my banquet to-morrow and I will open my mind to the king" (Esther i.-v.).

CHAPTER CXXXIII

THE STORY OF ESTHER (Concluded)

THAT day Aman departed joyful and merry because of the honour that had been paid him; but as he was leaving the palace, he saw Mardochai sitting at the gate. Mardochai neither rose to salute him nor deigned to pay him any mark of respect. On reaching his own house Aman said to his wife and friends: "Though I am blessed with many children and possess great riches; though the king has advanced me above all his princes and servants, yet I think I have nothing so long as I see Mardochai the Jew sitting before the king's gate." At their advice he gave orders for a beam to be erected fifty cubits high, and promised, with the king's consent, to hang Mardochai upon it.

That night the king, unable to sleep, commanded his scribe to read to him the chronicles of the former kings and the records of his own reign. When the scribe came to where it was written how Mardochai had discovered the plot against the life of the king, Assuerus asked: "What honour and reward hath Mardochai received for this fidelity?" His courtiers answered: "He hath received no reward at all."

Just then Aman came into the inner court to make his request concerning Mardochai, and was summoned into the king's presence. "What," asked Assuerus of him, "ought to be done to the man whom the king is desirous to honour?" Thinking that it was himself that was meant, Aman replied: "The man whom the king desireth to honour ought to be clothed with the king's apparel, and to be set upon the king's horse, and to have the royal crown upon his head. Let the first of the princes and nobles hold his horse and go through the street of the city, proclaiming: Thus shall he be honoured whom the king hath a mind to honour." The advice pleased the king, and he said: "Go and do to Mardochai the Jew as thou hast spoken." Aman had no choice but to obey.

When he returned home, and with shame told his friends what had befallen him, they added to his grief and humiliation by predicting his speedy downfall. Even while they were speaking, an officer from the king bade him go quickly to the banquet prepared by the queen.

Towards the end of the feast, when the king was heated with wine, he said to the queen: "What is thy petition, Esther, that it may be granted thee?" Esther answered: "If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, give me my life for which I ask, and the lives of my people for whom I plead; for we are given up, I and my people, to be slain and to perish."

Astounded, the king demanded to know the author of so foul a design. Pointing to the trembling Aman, the queen exclaimed: "Behold, here is our adversary and most wicked enemy." But Aman cast down his eyes in shame.

Without a word Assuerus rose up and withdrew to the queen's gardens, where for a time he paced about in deep thought. On his return, finding Aman pleading for his life at the feet of Esther, he ordered him to be put to death; and being told that Aman had prepared a gibbet on which to hang Mardochai, he exclaimed: "Hang Aman upon it." The sentence was carried out on the unhappy man, and Mardochai was raised to the highest honours. At the same time the edict against the Jews was revoked.

In memory of their deliverance from Aman's cruelty the Jews instituted a new feast, the feast of *Purim* or *Lots*, so called from Aman's casting lots to determine on what day the destruction of the Jews was to be carried out (Esther v.-ix.).

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAS

ALSO CALLED

THE SECOND BOOK OF ESDRAS

This Book, written by Nehemias, is sometimes spoken of as the Second Book of Esdras because it continues the history, begun by Esdras, of God's people after the Captivity.

CHAPTER CXXXIV

THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM REBUILT, B.C. 444.

ON one occasion when Nehemias, a Jew of noble birth and cup-bearer to King Artaxerxes Longimanus, was presenting the cup to his royal master as usual, the king, seeing the expression of grief on his face, said to him: "Why is thy countenance sad? This is not without cause, but some evil, I know not what, is in thy heart."

Nehemias answered: "O king, live for ever: why should not my countenance be sorrowful, seeing that the city of the place of the sepulchres of my fathers is desolate, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire? If thy servant hath found favour in thy sight, I request that thou wouldst send me to the city where my fathers are buried, and I will rebuild it." On his promising to come back in a fixed time, he was sent by the king as governor of Jerusalem with a commission to rebuild the walls and to fortify the city.

Arrived at Jerusalem, Nehemias spent the first three days in privately viewing the city before showing to the priests and the ancients the letters which he had from the king, authorising him to proceed with the work. All vigorously applied themselves to the task before them; and as different portions of the wall were assigned to different families, the breaches were soon closed, and the gateways and towers began quickly to rise.

Sanaballat, the governor of Samaria, and other enemies of the Jews, at first ridiculed and scoffed at the work, saying: "If a fox go up, he will leap over their stone wall." Soon, however, they became alarmed, and induced their neighbours to rise up and attack the city before the walls should be finished.

Warned of the danger, Nehemias stationed at certain intervals behind the half-finished walls a number of men, some armed with swords and spears, others with bows. From that day, half of the people remained under arms, while the rest were occupied in building, working with one hand and holding the sword in the other. With a trumpeter by his side, ready to sound the alarm in case of danger, Nehemias passed from point to point along the fortifications; and at night no man took off his clothes, but with his weapons by

his side he snatched what little rest he could. So great was the zeal and energy of the people that in fifty-two days the walls were finished and the gates set up.

Esdras now took his stand on a raised platform with six Levites on his right hand and seven on his left, and read aloud the Book of the Law of Moses. All stood up, and with rapt attention listened to the words which flowed from the lips of Esdras; and when he blessed the Lord, the great God, they all answered with a loud "Amen," and adored with their faces to the ground. After this the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated, and all the people resolved to comply exactly with the Covenant which they now solemnly renewed.

Yet when Nehemias returned from a visit to the Persian Court, we find him soon afterwards bent on reforming the many abuses which had already begun to take root. These were chiefly mixed marriages and the profanation of the Sabbath. Many on this day even occupied themselves in buying and selling, and in working in the fields, to prevent which Nehemias gave orders for the city gates to be closed on the Sabbath day and for guards to be stationed there. He also renewed the observance of the Sabbatical year, the annual tribute for the upkeep of the Temple, and the tithes that were to be given for the support of the priests and the Levites.

Manasses even, one of the sons of the High Priest, had married the daughter of Sanaballat, and for refusing to quit his heathen wife was banished by Nehemias. He is said to have then gone to his father-in-law, who appointed him as the chief priest of a rival temple which he was allowed to set up on Mount Garizim in Samaria. Here Manasses was joined by many other priests and Levites who also had refused to put away their heathen wives; and in this way was established the schismatical worship of the Samaritans, resembling in many points the religion of the Jews. When Nehemias died is uncertain (2 Esdras).

THE TWO BOOKS OF MACHABEES

These Books contain the history of the Jews under Judas Machabeus and his brethren. The Second book is not a continuation of the First, but relates many of the same facts at greater length.

CHAPTER CXXXV

PUNISHMENT OF HELIODORUS

FOR a long time the Jews continued to enjoy peace under the kings of Persia; but at length the Persian Empire was brought to an end by the victories of Alexander the Great. When Alexander died (B.C. 323), his vast empire was divided among his generals, and thus arose the four kingdoms figuratively shown to the prophet Daniel, first under the appearance of a winged leopard with four heads, and then by the four horns which sprang from the he-goat's broken horn (Dan. vii. 8). The Jews first became subject to the Greek kings of Egypt, then alternately to those of Egypt and Syria, and at last entirely to those of Syria (B.C. 198-167). It was under the Syrian kings that Palestine was divided into five districts, Galilee, Samaria and Judaea to the west of the Jordan, and Trachonitis and Peraea to the east.

Both under the Ptolemies of Egypt and under the Greek kings of Syria the Jews were allowed full freedom of religious worship until, in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, a cruel persecution broke out against them. Yet under Seleucus Philopator the prevailing peace had received a rude shock. This was owing to the ill-will of one Simon against the High Priest Onias.

Philopator was informed by Simon, who was at that time overseer of the Temple, that immense sums of money were stored away in the treasury, and sent an officer Heliodorus, to demand the instant surrender of the money. Arrived at Jerusalem, Heliodorus was informed by Onias that the money in question was partly private property and partly destined for the support of widows and orphans. Heliodorus, however, replied that he had no choice but to carry out the king's commands.

Despite the remonstrances of Onias, Heliodorus entered the Temple with his guard and pressed forward towards the treasury; but suddenly overwhelmed with a feeling of dread, his attendants fell down upon the ground powerless to do their leader's bidding. At the same time there appeared a horseman terrible to behold, clad in glittering armour, and seated on a horse which, with its fore-feet, struck out fiercely at Heliodorus, while two comely young men, bright and glorious, approached him on either side and scourged him till he fell down speechless and unable to rise. A litter was

procured, and he was borne half-dead from the Temple. His servants had but little hope of his recovery; but after a time he regained consciousness and besought Onias to call upon the Most High to spare him.

While Onias was praying, the same two comely youths stood by the side of Heliodorus and said to him: "Give thanks to Onias the priest, because for his sake the Lord hath granted thee life; and thou, having been scourged by God, declare unto all men His wonderful power and the greatness of His works." They then vanished from sight, and Heliodorus, with expressions of deep gratitude to Onias, returned to the king.

Even yet Seleucus contemplated sending another officer to Jerusalem for the purpose of securing the treasure, but was dissuaded by Heliodorus, who said to him: "If thou hast an enemy or a traitor to thy kingdom, send him thither, and thou shalt receive him scourged if so be he escape; for there is undoubtedly in that place a certain power of God" (2 Mach. iii.).

CHAPTER CXXXVI

ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES SACKS JERUSALEM, B.C. 170.

SIMON still continued to stir up enmity against Onias, who in the end was forced to leave Jerusalem. Onias had an ambitious brother, Jason, who wickedly sought the High Priesthood for himself, and offered King Antiochus Epiphanes 440 talents of silver if he might be allowed to supplant his brother. His schemes succeeded only too well; and, through his influence, so general became the depravity of the city that even the priests, despising the services of the Temple and neglecting the sacrifices, took part with the Jewish youths in corrupt pagan customs, and abandoned themselves to the many vices of the Gentiles.

Soon Jason's brother Menelaus succeeded in supplanting him in the very way in which he himself had driven Onias from the sacred office, and, to raise the required money, sold some of the golden vessels of the Temple.

Onias, now at Antioch, heard of the sacrilegious acts of Menelaus, and by letter severely reproved him for his daring impiety. At this time the king was in Cilicia, and Menelaus bribed Andronicus, a noble to whom the affairs of the king had been entrusted, to put Onias to death. Antiochus was filled with anger at the cruel wrong, and on his return caused Andronicus to be beheaded on the selfsame spot on which Onias had been slain.

Hearing a false report of the death of Antiochus, Jason thought the opportunity a favourable one for recovering his lost dignity. With a force of 1,000 men he succeeded by a sudden attack in making himself master of the city. He vented his fury on the defenceless citizens and the streets ran with the blood of his fellow-countrymen. Menelaus fled for safety to the fortress.

News reached Antiochus that the Jews, rejoicing at his supposed

death, were in open revolt. Marching forthwith against the city, which made but a feeble attempt to hold out, he spared neither age nor sex. For three days the slaughter continued, as many as 40,000 being massacred and as many more being sold into slavery. The treasury was plundered, the sacred vessels were removed from the Temple, and the House of God was polluted by the offering of unclean animals on the altar. Hated by all men as an enemy to his country, Jason fled from city to city and died at length at Lacedemon (2 Mach. iv., v.).

CHAPTER CXXXVII

MARTYRDOM OF ELEAZAR AND THE MACHABEES

In the hope of blotting out for ever the Jewish people and their religion, Antiochus sent Apollonius to Jerusalem at the head of an army of 22,000 men, with instructions to put to death every man he should find in the flower of his age, and to sell as slaves the women and children.

Pretending that he had come on an errand of peace, Apollonius rested till the following Sabbath; then taking the people off their guard, he gave the signal for slaughter. Houses were entered and their inmates dragged into the streets to be slain; the city was given up to plunder, buildings were set on fire, the walls of the city thrown down, and a citadel commanding the approaches to the Temple was raised and garrisoned with the king's troops. Those who escaped from Jerusalem fled to the desert, many remained in places of concealment, and only such were spared as promised to conform to the ways of the Gentiles.

It was next sought to destroy every vestige of Jewish worship. The Temple was turned into a place for revelling and wickedness, a statue of Jupiter Olympius was set up therein, while the temple on Mount Garizim was given up to the worship of Jupiter Hospitalis, and swine and unclean beasts were commanded to be used for the sacrifices. The Sabbaths and solemn festivals of the Jews were no longer to be observed, circumcision was made a capital offence, and all copies of the Sacred Writings that could be discovered were ordered to be destroyed.

Cruel martyrdoms were the consequence. Two women who were accused of having circumcised their children were publicly led through the streets of the city, and then, with their infants hanging at their breasts, were hurled headlong from the walls.

On another occasion a number of Jews who had secretly met in a cave for the purpose of observing the Sabbath were surprised and burnt alive by the governor of the city.

We next come to the death of the aged and venerable Eleazar. Pressed to eat swine's flesh in violation of the Law, he chose a glorious death before a life purchased by disgrace. At the sight of his grey hairs and reverend appearance the bystanders were moved to pity, and besought him to eat the lawful meat that they offered him, that

by doing so he might appear to be obeying the king's commands. He answered them: "It doth not become our age to dissemble, whereby many young persons might think that Eleazar, at the age of fourscore and ten years, was gone over to the life of the heathens; and so they, through my dissimulation, and for a little time of a corruptible life, should be deceived, and hereby I should bring a stain and a curse upon my old age." Arrived at the place of execution, he was most cruelly scourged, and died with the utmost fortitude, thus leaving to the whole nation a memorable example of virtue.

Yet another glorious example of fidelity to God's law is given to us by the seven brothers who, together with their mother, joyfully endured tortures still more cruel. Their only crime was refusal to partake of food which the Jewish law forbade them to eat. Antiochus was present in person at their execution.

Brought before Antiochus, the eldest son replied to his threats: "What wouldst thou seek or learn of us? We are ready to die rather than to transgress the laws of God received from our fathers." The cruel monster at once gave orders for his tongue to be cut out, the skin of his head to be torn away, the extremities of his hands and feet to be chopped off, and for him to be cast, while still alive, into a heated pan and slowly roasted to death before the eyes of his mother and brethren, who stood by encouraging one another to die courageously.

The second son displayed the same heroic fortitude as the first, and so with each of his brothers who were tortured to death in a similar manner. "Thou destroyest us out of this present life," spoke one, "but the King of the world will raise us up, who die for His laws, in the resurrection of eternal life."

When it came to the turn of the youngest, Antiochus had recourse to persuasion and fair promises. He told him that he would take him as his friend, would heap riches and honours upon him, and that every happiness should be his; but all in vain. He then appealed to the mother to add her entreaties to his. "My son," she said, "I beseech thee, look upon heaven and earth, and all that is in them, and consider that God made them out of nothing, and mankind also; so thou shalt not fear this tormentor, but being made a worthy partner with thy brethren, receive death, that I may receive thee again with them."

The young man then called to the executioners: "For whom do you stay? I will not obey the commandment of the king, but the commandment which was given us by Moses." In his rage the king heaped more barbarous cruelties upon him than upon any of those who had gone before him. At last it came to the mother's turn, and she also willingly gave herself up to death that she might share with her sons the joys of eternal life (2 Mach. v.-vii.).

CHAPTER CXXXVIII

MATHATHIAS AND HIS FIVE SONS

Among those who at this time fled from Jerusalem was a priest named Mathathias, who with his five sons withdrew to his ancestral town of Modin. From Asamoneus, the great-grandfather of Mathathias, they were called Asmoneans, and they and their descendants ruled over the Jews for 126 years. Other Jews also joined them in their retreat.

They were not destined to remain long undisturbed. Apelles, an officer of Antiochus, was sent to compel them to offer sacrifices and to burn incense to Jupiter. He promised wealth and honours to Mathathias if he would but sacrifice to the gods of the Syrians, and thus set an example to his fellow-citizens. Mathathias answered: "Although all nations obey King Antiochus, I and my sons and my brethren will be faithful to the Law of our fathers. We will not hearken to the words of King Antiochus, neither will we sacrifice."

Just then an apostate Jew, eager to win the king's favour by being the first to comply, came forward in the sight of all and sacrificed according to the commands of Antiochus. Fired with indignation at the sight, Mathathias sprang forward and slew him at the altar, then calling on all who had any zeal for the Law to join him, he and his five sons now turned upon Apelles and laid him lifeless in the dust. They next tore down the altar and withdrew to the mountains. Before long they were in a position to take the field against the troops sent by Antiochus to track them.

In the desert they and their followers, with their wives and children, abode in caves. Now, on a certain Sabbath, many of these were surprised by a body of soldiers sent from Jerusalem; and thinking that it would be unlawful to defend themselves on the Sabbath day, they allowed themselves to be ruthlessly slaughtered to the number of a thousand. Mathathias on hearing this was filled with grief, and with his followers arrived at this determination: "Whosoever shall come up against us to fight on the Sabbath day, we will fight against him."

With a body of brave followers Mathathias soon after this left the mountains, and attacking the towns of Judaea, forced the king's troops to retire before him. He threw down the heathen altars, enforced the law of circumcision, inflicted punishment on those Jews who violated the law, and succeeded in restoring to the inhabitants the religion of their fathers.

When he knew that his life was drawing to a close, Mathathias called his sons around him to receive his last blessing. John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar, and Jonathan ranged themselves about the bed of their dying father, who addressed them in these words: "Be zealous for the law, my sons, and give your lives for the covenant of your fathers, and you shall receive glory and an everlasting name. Simon is a man of counsel: give ear to him always, and he shall be a father

to you. And Judas Machabeus, who is valiant and strong from his youth up, let him be the leader of your army, and he shall manage the war of the people. You shall take to you all that observe the law, and revenge ye the wrongs of your people." When he died, his body was laid in the sepulchre of his ancestors at Modin (1 Mach. ii.).

CHAPTER CXXXIX

JUDAS MACHABEUS, B.C. 166

LIKE a giant, Judas Machabeus " put on a breast-plate and girt his warlike armour about him, in his acts being like a lion, and like a lion's whelp roaring for his prey." He marched out to meet Apollonius, routed his forces, and slew the general himself, whose sword he took away and fought with during the greater part of his life.

Seron, who was now placed in command of the Syrian forces, boastfully exclaimed: " I will get a name and will be glorified in the kingdom, and will overthrow Judas and those that are with him that have despised the king's edict."

The two armies met at Bethoron, some seven leagues north of Jerusalem. When the followers of Machabeus saw the overwhelming forces drawn up against them, they said to him: " How shall we, being few, be able to fight so great and so strong a multitude?" " It is an easy matter," answered Judas, " for many to be shut up in the hands of a few; and there is no difference in the sight of the God of heaven to deliver with a great multitude or with a small company. The Lord will overthrow them; fear them not." With that he gave the signal for battle. The conflict was short but decisive; for Seron having fallen, the Syrian army fled in disorder, pursued by the victorious Hebrews.

Antiochus next despatched a vast force under the command of his most famous generals, Ptolemy, Nicanor, and Gorgias. They encamped in the plain near Emmaus, a little to the west of Jerusalem. So confident were they of success that they even brought merchants with them, to whom they offered to sell the Jewish captives.

During the night Gorgias, with a picked body of men and guided by renegade Jews, secretly left the camp with the intention of taking Judas unawares. But Judas, who had been made aware of his plan, caused the camp-fires to be lit as usual, and, favoured by the darkness, arrived by a circuitous route at Emmaus just before daybreak. Here he took up a position commanding a view of the Syrian camp.

As soon at the morning dawned, Judas gave the signal for battle. In a moment the trumpets rang out, and the war-cry of the Jews echoed from the hills. The attack had been so unexpected that the Syrians ran to and fro, utterly disorganised by the sudden panic, which quickly spread through the whole host. Many were slain in the camp, and as many as 3,000 fugitives fell by the swords of their pursuers.

Gorgias, who had sought in vain for the army of Machabeus, was returning with his wearied troops when his attention was arrested

by the sight of the smoke which issued from the Syrian camp. A sudden fear seized him and his men, and they, too, abandoned themselves to flight. Judas and his little band returned laden with booty, " blessing God in heaven because He is good, and His mercy endureth for ever."

Lysias was the next Syrian general to come against Machabeus, and soon we find him encamped at Bethoron with an army of 60,000 foot and 5,000 horse. To oppose this mighty host Judas could muster only 10,000 men; yet so bravely did they advance to the attack that Lysias was put to flight with a loss of 5,000 men, and was compelled to withdraw to Antioch.

When Judas returned to Jerusalem, he found the Sanctuary desolate, the altars profaned, the gates burnt, shrubs growing in the courts of the Temple as in a forest, and the adjoining chambers thrown down. There still remained in the citadel a garrison of Syrian soldiers; and to keep these in check he detached a body of men while he and the rest performed what religion required of them. The holy places were cleansed, the altars and statues of the false gods which had been set up in the House of God were removed, and a new altar of holocausts was dedicated in place of the original one which had been profaned by impure victims, and by having an altar of Jupiter erected above it.

When the sacred veils had been hung, and the golden candlesticks and the other sacred furniture put in their respective places, the Temple was dedicated with solemn ceremonial. In memory of this event a festival called the *Feast of Dedication* was appointed to be celebrated annually.

The surrounding nations, jealous of the rising power of the Jews, now began to rise up against them. After a battle with the governor of Idumaea, when Judas and his company came to bury their fallen comrades, they found concealed beneath the tunics of the slain some of the votive offerings which had been hung in the heathen temples, and which, contrary to the law, they had taken away. The Jews betook themselves to prayer, and besought the Lord that the sin which had been committed might be forgotten. Judas collected 12,000 drachms of silver and sent it to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead; for, adds the Sacred Text: " It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sins " (2 Mach. xii., 46; 1 Mach. iii., iv.).

CHAPTER CXL

DEATH OF ANTIOCHUS—COURAGE OF ELEAZAR

News of the ill-successes of his generals filled Antiochus with rage, and he vowed to make Jerusalem the common burying-place of the whole Jewish nation. But the Lord struck him with an incurable disease, which so racked him with pain that he feared his end to be near. Still, breathing fury against the Jews, he mounted his chariot and ordered his servants to press forward with all speed. While

he was hastening on, an accident befell his chariot and he was thrown violently to the ground. Bruised and unable to rise he had to be borne in a litter, worms swarmed out of his body, and his flesh began to fall off.

At last the pride of Antiochus was humbled, and he confessed: "It is just to be subject to God, and a mortal man should not equal himself to God." He prayed to the Lord for mercy, and promised that he would make Jerusalem independent, that he would grant full liberty to the Jews, that he would adorn the Temple with goodly gifts, yea, that he would become a Jew himself, and go through the whole earth declaring the power of God. But his repentance being purely on account of his present sufferings, he died miserably.

His successor, Antiochus Eupator, then a mere boy, sent an overwhelming force against the Jews, placing Lysias in command. Lysias tried to enter Judaea by the south, and advanced through Idumaea as far as Bethsura. The inhabitants of Bethsura defended their city bravely, and even sallied out against the enemy and burnt and destroyed their military engines.

Machabeus was besieging the Syrian stronghold in Jerusalem, but now he raised the siege and advanced to meet Antiochus and Lysias. In the enemy's army were thirty-two elephants trained to battle, each bearing on its back a wooden tower which concealed a number of archers. As the Syrians advanced to the attack, they caused the hills around to echo with their battle-cry.

Undismayed, the Jewish army advanced to the fight. Eleazar, the brother of Judas, seeing an elephant taller than the rest and conspicuous for its glittering armour, and believing that the young king was upon its back, cut his way through the midst of those who surrounded it and plunged his sword into its body; but he was crushed to death by its fall.

The Jews, however, were forced to fall back on Jerusalem, and Judas withdrew to the Temple, which alone was fortified and in his power. After the fall of Bethsura, Antiochus advanced on Jerusalem and closely invested the Temple. The Jewish army must soon have been reduced to surrender had it not been that at this critical moment the king received news of trouble in his own capital. Lysias easily persuaded him that peace was now most expedient, and favourable conditions were granted to the Jews. Before he withdrew, Antiochus appointed Machabeus governor and prince from Ptolemais in the north to the Gerrenians in the south (2 Mach. ix.; 1 Mach. vi.).

CHAPTER CXLI

DEATH OF JUDAS MACHABEUS, B.C. 161.

SHORTLY after the events recorded in the last chapter both Antiochus and Lysias were put to death by Demetrius Soter, the king's cousin, who then secured the throne for himself.

At this time Alcimus had been chosen High Priest in place of the wicked Menelaus; but he was, if possible, even more wicked than his

predecessor, and was never permitted to discharge the duties of the sacred office. It was owing to his treachery and false accusations against Judas that Demetrius sent an army to take vengeance on the Jews and to reinstate Alcimus in his office of High Priest; but the army was compelled to withdraw from Jerusalem without accomplishing its object.

A second and greater army, commanded by Nicanor, a sworn enemy of the Jews, was sent against Judas. Nicanor sent Judas a message of peace, declaring on oath that he had come with no other intention than that of making known the wishes of the king. For a time the two lived on terms of friendship till the suspicions of Judas were aroused, and he secretly withdrew from the city. Nicanor then took up his position at Bethoron till he was joined by other Syrian troops.

Before joining battle, Judas prayed: "O Lord, when they that were sent by Sennacherib blasphemed Thee, an angel went out and slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand: even so destroy this army in our sight to-day."

His prayer was answered. In a vision there appeared to him the holy priest Onias who had been put to death at Antioch, and the prophet Jeremias, who presented Judas with a golden sword, and said: "Take this holy sword, a gift from God, wherewith thou shalt overthrow the enemies of Israel."

When Judas made known to his soldiers the vision he had had, they advanced to the fight, full of joy and confident of victory. Nicanor's troops were scattered like chaff, and he and five-and-thirty thousand Syrians were left lifeless on the battle-field.

Judas now sought the friendship of the Romans, and sent the two sons of Eleazar to conclude a treaty of peace and alliance with the Senate. The ambassadors were favourably received, and a treaty was drawn up and sent, engraven on brass, to Jerusalem. At the same time this letter was addressed from the Senate to Demetrius: "Why hast thou made thy yoke heavy upon our friends and allies the Jews? If, therefore, they come again to us complaining of thee, we will do them justice, and will make war against thee by sea and land."

Before the ambassadors could return, however, Demetrius sent another army, under the command of Bacchides, to avenge the death of Nicanor. When the little army of Judas learnt the strength of the Syrian forces marching against them, they began to lose heart, and deserted in such numbers that only 800 were left. Judas said to them: "Let us arise and go against the enemy." But they answered him: "We shall not be able: let us save our lives now, and return to our brethren, for we are but few." "God forbid," said Judas, "that we should do this thing and flee from them. But if our time be come, let us die manfully for our brethren, and let us not stain our glory."

From morning till evening the battle raged. Judas attacked the enemy's right wing, broke their ranks, and put them to flight: but

whilst pursuing them he was surrounded and cut down by the left wing. After the battle he was found among the slain, and was buried by his brothers Jonathan and Simon in the sepulchre of their father at Modin. All the people bewailed his death, and, mourning for him, exclaimed: "How is the mighty man fallen that saved the people of Israel." Never had there been a more accomplished and virtuous champion (2 Mach. xv.; 1 Mach. viii., ix.).

CHAPTER CXLII

JONATHAN HIGH PRIEST AND PRINCE

AFTER the death of Judas the country was in great distress from famine, and the cruelties inflicted by Bacchides on the faithful Jews surpassed even those of Antiochus Epiphanes. Jonathan, who had been chosen to succeed Machabeus as general of the Jewish army, unable to meet Bacchides in the field, retired with his followers to the desert of Thecua, a few miles to the south of Bethlehem.

Hearing on one occasion that Jonathan was encamped near the Jordan, Bacchides, in the hope of gaining an easy victory, surprised him on the Sabbath day; but Jonathan rushed fearlessly on the foe, and all but succeeded in striking down the Syrian general himself; then he leaped with his companions into the river and escaped, leaving a thousand of his opponents dead upon the bank. For two years after this the Jews were left in peace.

At the end of that time Bacchides returned and attacked Jonathan in his stronghold at Bethbessen, near Jericho, but was repulsed with heavy loss and forced to conclude peace with him. He promised on oath that he would no more harm the Jews, and finally withdrew from the country. Because the citadel of Sion was still in the hands of the enemy, Jonathan chose Machmas as his residence.

A rival to Demetrius had sprung up in the person of Alexander Bales, who represented himself to be a son of Antiochus Epiphanes, and both rivals were eager to secure the support of Jonathan, who was now allowed to dwell in security in Jerusalem. Jonathan finally declared for Alexander, who soon afterwards defeated and slew Demetrius after the latter had reigned for twelve years.

Alexander's letter to Jonathan was as follows: "King Alexander to his brother Jonathan, greeting. We have heard of thee that thou art a man of great power, and fit to be our friend; now, therefore, we make thee this day High Priest of thy nation, and decree that thou be called the king's friend. Be of one mind with us in our affairs, and keep friendship with us." Along with this letter the ambassadors brought a purple robe and a crown of gold, in which Jonathan appeared for the first time on the Feast of Tabernacles.

Tryphon, another claimant to the Syrian throne, believing the crown to be now within his reach, but seeing an obstacle to his ambition in the person of Jonathan, tried to get him into his power by an act of treachery. Pretending the greatest friendship for him, he succeeded in luring him into Ptolemais; and no sooner had he

entered the city with but 1,000 attendants than the gates were shut and his brave followers put to the sword. Tryphon eventually seized the throne (1 Mach. ix.-xii.).

CHAPTER CXLIII

SIMON MACHABEUS HIGH PRIEST

APART from Jonathan, the only son of Mathathias now left was Simon, who ruled the Jews for nine years, combining in his person the dignity of prince and of High Priest.

Simon raised an army to oppose Tryphon, who was marching against Judaea, bearing with him Jonathan, whom he had kept a close prisoner. Tryphon sent this message to Simon: "We have detained thy brother Jonathan for the money which he owed to the king. But now send a hundred talents of silver and his two sons for hostages, that when he is at liberty he may not revolt from us."

Fearing to offend the Jews if he should leave anything undone to save Jonathan, Simon faithfully complied with the conditions laid down. But no sooner did Tryphon get the sons of Jonathan into his power than he slew both them and their father, and then withdrew into Syria.

Demetrius, who, though driven from Antioch, still possessed a great part of Asia, was now loyally supported by Simon, and in return recognised him as High Priest, granted the Jews immunity from tribute and taxes, and promised them their freedom. Thus, after a hard and protracted struggle did the Jews at length secure their independence, B.C. 143.

To record the benefits conferred on the nation by the sons of Mathathias, the Jews had these words engraved on tables of brass and set up within the Sanctuary: "Forasmuch as there have been wars in our country, and Simon and his brethren have put themselves in danger, and have raised the nation to great glory, the Jews and their priests have consented that Simon should be prince and High Priest for ever, *till there arise a faithful prophet.*" This line of royal High Priests continued in his family till Herod began to sell the sacred office, and the faithful prophet, Christ, appeared.

In company with his two sons, Simon, while passing from city to city for the purpose of securing the better administration of justice, came to Jericho, where they were received with every mark of welcome and affection by Ptolemy, Simon's own son-in-law and governor of Jericho. Invited by Ptolemy to a feast prepared in their honour, they gladly, and without fear of treachery, availed themselves of his hospitality. Ptolemy, however, had in concealment a number of armed men; and when the feast was at its height, these, at a given signal, rushed out and slew their master's guests, together with their attendants.

Hearing that Simon's eldest son John was at Gazara, Ptolemy would have slain him, too, had not a timely messenger warned the

youth of his danger and of the cruel fate of his father and two brothers. John hastened to Jerusalem, and was there received as his father's successor, B.C. 135 (1 Mach. xiii.-xvi.).

(*Here, with the close of the Books of Machabees, ends the Old Testament narrative.*)

CHAPTER CXLIV

THE ASMONEAN KINGS

JOHN, surnamed HYRCANUS, was the eldest son of Simon, and succeeded his father as prince and High Priest. He reigned twenty-nine years.

ARISTOBULUS I., son of Hyrcanus, besides the office of High Priest, assumed the title of king, being the first of his countrymen to do so from the time of the Babylonian captivity.

ALEXANDER JANNEUS, the brother of Aristobulus I., occupied the throne after him, and succeeded in bringing under his sway the territory that had formerly belonged to the Twelve Tribes. At his death he left the kingdom to his widow Alexandra, or Salome.

SALOME showed herself a capable ruler and reigned for nine years, leaving two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus.

HYRCANUS II. was High Priest during the reign of Salome, and at her death the crown also passed to him. Being but a weakling, he was compelled, after a reign of three months, to resign to his brother both the High Priesthood and the crown. He was allowed to go into peaceful retirement.

ARISTOBULUS II. as well as his brother Hyrcanus, sought the aid of the Romans, who decided in favour of Aristobulus. In this reign Pompey, a Roman general, took Jerusalem, and with a number of his followers not only went into the Temple, but even entered the Holy of Holies, " and saw all that which was unlawful for any other men to see, but only for the High Priests." Pompey restored the High-Priesthood to Hyrcanus, and though he allowed him to retain the royal title, it was merely as the vassal of Rome that he was permitted to rule.

Thus was Judaea, from being an independent kingdom, made tributary to the Roman Republic. Among the captives carried off were Aristobulus and his four children—two sons, Alexander and Antigonus, and two daughters. Alexander escaped, but the rest were conducted to Rome to grace the conqueror's triumph.

ANTIGONUS, as well as his father, escaped later, and with the aid of foreign assistance usurped the throne and the High Priesthood for two years. As last he was taken prisoner and sent to Antioch, where, at the instigation of Herod, the Roman Triumvir Antony caused him to be beheaded.

HEROD, surnamed THE GREAT, an Idumaean by birth, was now recognised by the Roman Senate as king of the Jews; and thus passed away the last of the Priest-Kings of the Asmonean line. [*Summarised from Josephus*].

The sceptre was at length taken away from the family of Juda, and the time was at hand when He, the desired of nations, was to come: "The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda till He come that is to be sent, and He shall be the expected of nations" (Gen. xlix. 10). It was while Herod was king and Caesar Augustus ruled over the Roman world that the prophecy of Isaias was to be fulfilled: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel" (Isa. vii. 14).

INTERMEDIARY CHAPTER

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

In three ways God made known to the world the Redeemer that was to free mankind from the fatal effects of Adam's fall: (1) By *Promises*, (2) by *Types* or *Figures*; (3) by *Prophecies*.

In the foregoing narrative we have spoken of the Promises, and have drawn attention to the many Types and Figures of the Messias; it has therefore been thought well to name here the chief Prophecies relating to His life, death, and resurrection.

We have seen that, in the very hour of man's fall, God declared to him that one should be born of the seed of the woman who should crush the serpent's head. He therefore set apart from the race of Sem one people, of the stock of Abraham; and from that people one tribe, the tribe of Juda, from which, through David, was to be born the Messias.

Now when we find the various Prophets, separated by long intervals of time and space, drawing in inspired words the portrait of Christ, whom they never saw, and when we further note that, as soon as Christ appears, the portrait is a true one, we know that God must have shown them the original, and that what they wrote must have been written under the direct inspiration of an all-knowing God.

The Messias is to be born of a virgin. "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel" (Isa. vii. 14).

Bethlehem is to be His birthplace. "And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Juda: out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be the Ruler in Israel: and His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity" (Mich. v. 2).

The very time of His Birth is given to us. "Know thou, therefore, and take notice, that from the going forth of the word to build up Jerusalem again, unto Christ the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks [*of years*]" (Dan. ix. 25).

A special messenger or herald is to precede Him. "Behold, I send My angel, and he shall prepare the way before My face" (Mal. iii. 1). "The voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God" (Isa. xl. 3).

THE KINGS OF THE EAST, THE MAGI, SHALL OFFER HIM GIFTS. "The kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts, and all kings of the earth shall adore Him" (Ps. lxxi. 10, 11).

THE MASSACRE OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS IS FORETOLD. "A voice was heard on high of lamentation, of mourning and weeping, of Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted for them, because they are not" (Jer. xxxi. 15).

CHRIST FLIES INTO EGYPT AND IS RECALLED THENCE. "And I called my son out of Egypt" (Osee xi. 1).

THE PLACE OF HIS MINISTRY IS GIVEN. "At the first time the land of Zabulon and the land of Nephtali was lightly touched; and at the last the way of the sea beyond the Jordan of the Galilee of the Gentiles was heavily loaded" (Isa. ix. 1).

THE CHARACTER OF HIS MISSION IS PROCLAIMED. "The spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me: He hath sent Me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach a release to the captives, and deliverance to them that are shut up: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Isa. lxi. 1, 2).

THE VERY CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS PASSION ARE VIVIDLY DEPICTED. "He was offered because it was His own will, and He opened not His mouth. He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter and shall be dumb as a lamb before His shearer, and He shall not open His mouth" (Isa. liii. 7).

HOW HE SHALL ENTER JERUSALEM. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem: Behold thy King will come to thee, the Just and Saviour. He is poor and riding upon an ass and upon a colt, the foal of an ass" (Zach. ix. 9).

HE SHALL BE BETRAYED FOR THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER. "For even the man of My peace, in whom I trusted, who ate My bread, hath greatly supplanted Me" (Ps. xl. 10). "And they weighed for My wages thirty pieces of silver" (Zach. xi. 12).

HE SHALL BE ABANDONED BY HIS DISCIPLES. "Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered" (Zach. xiii. 7).

FALSE WITNESSES SHALL BE BROUGHT AGAINST HIM. "Unjust witnesses, rising up, have asked Me things I knew not" (Ps. xxxiv. 11).

HE SHALL BE INSULTED AND ABUSED BY THE RABBLE. "I have given My body to the strikers and My cheeks to them that plucked them: I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me and spit upon Me" (Isa. l. 6).

HIS APPEARANCE AFTER BEING SCOURGED AND CROWNED WITH THORNS. "From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head there is no soundness therein: wounds and bruises and swelling sores" (Isa. i. 6).

HE SHALL BE AN OBJECT OF DISDAIN, A MAN OF SORROWS. "Despised, and the most abject of men, a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity. . . . Surely He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows. But He was wounded for our iniquities: He was bruised for our sins; and by His bruises we were healed" (Isa. liii. 3-5).

His very wounds are named. "They have dug My hands and feet, they have numbered all My bones" (Ps. xi. 17, 18). "And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced" (Zach. xii., 10).

Gall and vinegar shall be offered Him. "And they gave Me gall for My food, and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink" (Ps. lxviii. 22).

The very words expressing His abandonment are given to us. "O God, My God, look upon Me: why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Ps. xxi. 1).

How His garments would be divided. "They divided My garments amongst them, and upon My vesture they cast lots" (Ps. xxi. 19).

His Resurrection is foretold. "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; nor wilt Thou give Thy Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. xv. 10).

His Ascension also. "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates; and the King of Glory shall enter" (Ps. xxiii. 7).

His exaltation and everlasting priesthood. "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool. . . . The Lord hath sworn, and He shall not repent; Thou art a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech" (Ps. cix. 1-4).

The New Sacrifice—the Clean Oblation. "From the rising of the sun even to the going down My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation" (Mal. i. 11).

In the Old Testament, St. Augustine points out, the New lies hidden, and in the New the Old lies open. If we seek among all the children of David who lived before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, we shall recognise one Son of David in whom alone this wonderful, this mysterious description, agrees to the very letter, one whom we all love to address by the endearing title of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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PALESTINE
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CHRIST
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33
Sidon
Sarepta
Tyre
PHOENICE
TETRARCHY OF LYSANIAS
Mt Hermon
ABILENE
Damascus
SYRIA
Jordan
ITURAEA
Caesarea Philippi
TETRARCHY
TRACHONITIS
GAULANITIS
AURANITIS
OF PHILIP
UPPER GALILEE
Ptolemais
Corozain
Capharnaum
Bethsaida
Gergesenes
Gergesa
Magdala
Tiberias
Sea of Galilee
TETRARCHY OF HEROD ANTIPAS
Mt Carmel
Cana
Nazareth
Mt Thabor
Naim
Little Hermon
DECAPOLIS
Gadara
LOWER GALILEE
Jezrahel
Bethabara
Caesarea Palaestina
Mt Gelboe
Salim
Aenon
SAMARIA
Samaria
Mediterranean Sea

THE NEW TESTAMENT

PART I

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF JESUS CHRIST

CHAPTER I

THE ANGEL'S MESSAGE TO ZACHARY

TO prepare for the coming of the Messias upon earth and to lead men to a lively faith in Him, God chose as His instrument one whom the prophet Malachias had long beforehand foretold when he said: "Behold I send My angel, and he shall prepare the way before My face" (Mal. iii. 1). This was none other than John the Baptist, "the man sent from God for a witness to give testimony of the Light, that all men might believe through him" (John i. 6, 7).

Of the worthiness of Zachary and his wife Elizabeth to be the parents of such a son we have the testimony of the Sacred Text itself: "There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zachary; and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both just before God, walking in all the commandments of the Lord without blame" (Luke i. 5, 6). A great cause of sorrow to them was that as yet they had no children; and they were both advanced in age.

On one occasion while Zachary was engaged in his sacred duties in the Temple, and was offering incense in the Sanctuary while the people prayed without, there suddenly appeared standing on the right side of the Altar of Incense an angel of the Lord. When Zachary saw him, he was troubled and afraid; but the angel said to him: "Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice in his nativity. For he shall be great before the Lord and shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. He shall convert many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God; and he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias . . . to prepare unto the Lord a perfect people."

Zachary said to the angel: "Whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." The angel said to him: "I am Gabriel, who stand before God, and am sent to speak to thee, and to bring thee these good tidings. And behold, thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be able to speak until the day wherein these things shall come to pass, because thou hast not believed my words, which shall be fulfilled in their time."

Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zachary, and they wondered that he tarried so long in the Temple; but when he came out and could not speak to them, they understood that he had seen a vision. " And he made signs to them and remained dumb " (Luke i.).

CHAPTER II

THE ANNUNCIATION AND VISITATION

In the sixth month after Gabriel's visit to Zachary he was sent on a similar but more exalted mission to a virgin named Mary, who lived at Nazareth, a city of Galilee. Mary was espoused to a man named Joseph, a just man, and one who, like herself, was of the family of David. Although he was of royal descent, Joseph was poor, and had to earn his bread as a carpenter.

Coming into Mary's presence, Gabriel saluted her with the words: " Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." Mary was troubled in spirit at his greeting and wondered what manner of salutation this might be. The angel said to her: " Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father; and He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

Mary said to the angel: " How shall this be done, because I know not man?" The angel answered: " The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age, because no word shall be impossible with God." Then Mary answered: " Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." And the angel departed from her.

Shortly after the Annunciation Mary hastened to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who dwelt far away in the hilly district lying to the south of Judaea. Arrived at her journey's end, she entered Zachary's house and saluted Elizabeth, who no sooner heard her salutation than her infant leaped for joy in her womb. Elizabeth herself, filled with the Holy Ghost, cried out: " Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord."

Full of gratitude for God's goodness, the lowly Virgin, by Divine inspiration, broke forth into that glorious canticle, the *Magnificat*: " My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because He hath regarded the humility of His

handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me; and holy is His name. And His mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear Him. He hath shewed might in His arm: He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away. He hath received Israel His servant, being mindful of His mercy. As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever." Mary abode with her cousin about three months, after which time she returned to her own house at Nazareth (Luke i.).

CHAPTER III

BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

In due time Elizabeth brought forth a son. His birth was marked by the great rejoicing of her kinsfolk and neighbours, who, when the child was eight days old, came together to congratulate the happy parents, and to be present at the ceremony of circumcision, when it was also customary to give the child a name. The relatives wished him to be called by his father's name, and were surprised when Elizabeth insisted on his being called John, especially as none of Zachary's kindred had borne that name.

At length it was agreed to refer the matter to Zachary, who, being still dumb, made signs for writing-tablets to be brought him, and wrote: "John is his name." All were astonished; and still more so when, that same moment, his tongue was loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. Those who heard him were struck with fear, and said one to another: "What a one, think ye, shall this child be? For the hand of the Lord was with him."

Inspired by the Holy Ghost, Zachary then uttered that sublime canticle of praise and prophecy, the *Benedictus*: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; because He hath visited and wrought the redemption of His people; and hath raised up a horn of salvation to us in the house of David His servant. As He spoke by the mouth of His prophets who are from the beginning: Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us: to perform mercy to our fathers and to remember His holy testament. The oath which He swore to Abraham our father, that He would grant to us, that being delivered from the hand of our enemies, we may serve Him without fear in holiness and justice before Him, all our days. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways; to give knowledge of salvation to His people, unto the remission of their sins. Through the bowels of the mercy of our God, in which the Orient from on high hath visited us: to enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death: to direct our feet into the way of peace."

And the child grew and was strengthened in spirit; and was in the deserts until the day of his manifestation to Israel (Luke i.).

On leaving Zachary's house Mary returned to Nazareth. Then it was that an angel appeared to Joseph, who, as yet ignorant of the miraculous conception of his spouse, was disturbed at a mystery for which he could not account. Coming to him in his sleep, the angel said: " Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

Thus consoled and enlightened by the heavenly messenger, Joseph remained with his holy spouse as the protector of her chastity, and to secure her from calumnies in the birth of the Son of God (Matt. i. 19-24). How wonderfully were to be fulfilled those words of the prophet: " Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and His name shall be called Emmanuel " (Is. vii. 14).

CHAPTER IV

THE NATIVITY

Though Mary and Joseph had their home in Nazareth, and it seemed as if this city must witness the birth of the Messias, yet was the prophecy of Micheas to come to pass: " And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Juda: out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be the Ruler in Israel " (Mich. v. 2).

By a special providence of God, a decree was issued by Augustus Caesar, the Emperor of Rome, for a census of " the whole world." Now it was the custom among the Jews to be numbered according to their tribes and families. Hence Mary and Joseph, both of the family of David, were obliged to go to Bethlehem, the city of David, where the promised Redeemer was to be born.

In obedience then, to the Imperial decree, the two set out on their long journey, which to the delicate Virgin must have been most trying, consisting as it did of some eighty miles through a hilly country in the depth of winter. When they reached Bethlehem, they sought in vain for admission at the inns, which were already crowded with travellers more wealthy than they; and to their oft-repeated request for a lodging they received the unvarying reply, there was no room for them. In the end they had to content themselves with no better shelter than that afforded by a poor stable, occupied, as is generally believed, by an ox and an ass.

Here, exposed to the chilly winds of a winter's night, Mary gave birth to the Saviour of mankind, and, wrapping Him up in swaddling clothes, she laid Him in the manger. Thus was the Son of God born into the world, His first bed being a manger from which the cattle were wont to feed.

Meanwhile a heavenly messenger was sent to announce to the shepherds in the fields that in Bethlehem was born the Messias. We are told that, while they were watching and keeping the night-watches over their flocks, an angel of the Lord suddenly stood beside

them, and the brightness of God shone about them, so that they feared with a great fear. But the angel bade them fear not: "For behold," he said, "I bring you tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger." Then there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and proclaiming: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will."

No sooner had the heavenly vision vanished from their sight than the shepherds said one to another: "Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us."

Hastening on their way, they came to the stable and found the Divine Infant lying in the manger, as the angel had described to them, and Mary and Joseph kneeling in adoration over Him. They saw, and believed that He who lay there in such great poverty was their King, the Son of God; and they returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen. They thus became witnesses of Christ's birth, and spread the glad tidings to others, who wondered at those things that were told them by the shepherds. Meanwhile Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart (Luke ii.).

On the eighth day after His birth the Divine Child was circumcised (Luke ii. 21), and received the name Jesus (*Saviour*), the name brought down from heaven by Gabriel and expressive of the great purpose for which He had come into the world; for, as St. Peter says, "there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

CHAPTER V

THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE

When the forty days from the birth of our Saviour were ended, Mary, in conformity to the Law of Moses, went to the Temple for the twofold purpose of her own purification and of presenting her Son to God, in the same manner as every mother among the Jews had to offer her firstborn son. The Blessed Virgin Mother stood in no need of the ceremony of purification, but humbly submitted to it as her Divine Son had to that of Circumcision. Grace raised her above the Law, but her humility subjected her to it. The Law, moreover, ordained that at the Presentation the child was to be redeemed with a price, by the offering of a lamb, or, in the case of the poor, of two turtle-doves or two young pigeons, one for a holocaust, the other for a sin-offering (Lev. xii. 8). Owing to her poverty, Mary presented the offering of the poorer class.

At this time there lived in Jerusalem an aged man named Simeon, just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, for the coming of the Messias and the consequent redemption of mankind. The Holy Ghost, as we read, was in him, and had given him an inward

revelation that he should not die before he had seen the Lord's Anointed. Guided by the same Spirit, he had come into the Temple at the very time when Mary and Joseph brought in the Child Jesus.

Receiving the Divine Infant into his arms, Simeon blessed Him, and in a transport of joy exclaimed: "Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word, in peace; because my eyes have seen Thy Salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a Light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the Glory of Thy people Israel."

Mary and Joseph were filled with wonder at the things which were spoken concerning the Child. But Simeon blessed them and said to Mary: "Behold this Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed."

It is not that God sent His Son for the fall of any man, but that many, by wilfully refusing to receive and obey him, would take occasion of falling; as St. Paul remarks: "We are to some the odour of death unto death, but to the others the odour of life unto life" (2 Cor. ii. 16). Mary's soul was to be pierced with sorrow at the sight of her Divine Son's sufferings, and particularly as she stood at the foot of the Cross at the time of His Crucifixion.

Another witness to the Messias was the holy prophetess Anna, an aged widow, who departed not from the sacred precincts of the Temple, but remained serving God night and day in fasting and prayer. Hardly had Simeon ceased speaking when she came into the Temple, and recognising the Child whom he had just blessed, gave praise to the Lord her God, and spoke of Him to all who looked for the redemption of Israel (Luke ii.).

CHAPTER VI

ADORATION OF THE MAGI—FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Soon after the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, in the days of King Herod the Great, there came to Jerusalem three wise men from the East, and they asked: "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the East and are come to adore Him."

Now Herod, hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. The king at once assembled all the chief priests and scribes and the ancients of the people, and inquired of them where, according to prophecy, the Messias was to be born. They said to him: "In Bethlehem of Juda; for so it is written by the prophet." Accordingly, having called the wise men to him, he questioned them as to the exact time of the star's appearing to them, and professing a desire to worship the new-born King, he sent them to discover His abode.

They went on their way; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them until at length it stood over the place

where the Child was. They entered and found the Child with Mary His mother; and falling down, they adored Him, and, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

After they had performed their acts of adoration, they thought of returning to Herod immediately, without any suspicion of his evil designs in regard to the new-born King. God, however, warned them in a dream not to appear again before the king, but to go back by another road to their own country.

Soon after their departure, the Lord sent an angel to Joseph with the command: "Arise, and take the Child and His mother, and fly into Egypt, and be there until I shall tell thee; for it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him." Joseph rose up at once; and that very same night, with the Child and His mother, began the long and toilsome journey.

For a time Herod awaited the return of the Magi; but when he found that he had been deceived and that they had departed by another route, his rage knew no bounds. Now, at length, he showed what his real intentions had been. Forthwith he gave orders for all the male children not more than two years old, in and around Bethlehem, to be put to death, believing that the unknown Infant must needs be included in the general massacre.

His cruel order was put into execution with the utmost barbarity. Despite the piteous cries and entreaties of the distracted mothers, their infants were savagely torn from their arms and butchered before their very eyes. Then was fulfilled to the very letter the prophecy of Jeremias: "A voice was heard on high of lamentation, of mourning and weeping, of Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted for them, because they are not" (Jer. xxxi. 15). Rachel, who was buried at Bethlehem, is thus represented as mingling her mournful cries with those of the afflicted women.

A few years after this event Herod was seized with a loathsome disease and died miserably. Then it was that the angel again appeared to Joseph, and said: "Arise, and take the Child and His mother and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead that sought the life of the Child." With ready obedience Joseph undertook the journey; but when he heard that Herod had been succeeded by the cruel Archelaus, he avoided Judaea and directed his steps to Nazareth in Galilee (Matt. ii.). Thus was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophets: "He shall be called a Nazarene;" "And I called My Son out of Egypt" (Osee xi. 1).

CHAPTER VII

JESUS AMID THE DOCTORS

In Joseph's humble house at Nazareth we lose sight of the Divine Child until He is twelve years of age, and are simply told that He grew and waxed strong, full of wisdom, and that the grace of God was in Him. In proportion as He advanced in age He manifested more and more the treasures of grace and wisdom that were in Him

from the very moment of His conception. Thus it was that He wished to resemble us entirely. He possessed the virtues and graces of childhood; He was a youth rich in wisdom and knowledge; yet He chose to remain hidden until the moment marked out by His Heavenly Father for the exercise of His public ministry.

The only event yet to be recorded of Him before His baptism is the one given us by St. Luke of His being lost for three days in Jerusalem. During the great feast of the Passover all the men were required by the Law to repair to the Temple; and although the women were not so bound, it was considered a pious practice for them to go with the men. And when Jesus was twelve years old, we find Him accompanying His parents to the feast.

On their return homewards, Mary, finding that Jesus was not in her company, thought that He must be with Joseph, whilst Joseph believed He was with His mother; since, when people went up to the Temple from remote parts, it was the custom for the men to go in one company and the women in another, while the children went in either company indifferently. Nazareth was three days' journey from Jerusalem; and when, at the end of the first day's return journey, the caravan halted for the night, Mary and Joseph were overwhelmed with grief to find that the Divine Child was missing. In vain they sought for Him among their kinsfolk and friends. At length, believing that He must have been left behind in Jerusalem, they began sorrowfully to retrace their steps.

Not finding him on the way, they continued their fruitless search for two days and two nights throughout the Holy City itself. Only on the third day did they discover Him in the Temple seated amid the doctors of the Law, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His wisdom and His answers.

When His parents saw Him thus occupied, they wondered; and Mary said to Him: "Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." "Why did you seek Me?" He answered. "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" Mary and Joseph, we are told, understood not the word that He spoke unto them; but Mary kept in her heart all that she saw and heard. Jesus returned with them to Nazareth, and was subject to them; and He advanced in wisdom and age and grace with God and men (Luke ii.).

It is generally believed that St. Joseph died during this period—*i.e.*, between the visit of our Lord to the Temple in His twelfth year and the beginning of His public ministry—and that our Lord must have shared the humble lot of His foster-father, and worked as a carpenter to help to supply the needs of the Holy Family.

PART II

PREPARATION FOR OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY

CHAPTER VIII

MISSION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

IN the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius (A.D. 26), when Pontius Pilate was Governor of Judaea, "the word of the Lord was made unto John, the son of Zachary, in the desert." From his early years he had made his abode amid the hilly district that stretches from Hebron to Jerusalem.

St. John, who is regarded as a second Elias, even in his very dress recalled the person of that prophet: from his shoulders there hung a garment of camel's hair, and he wore a leathern girdle about his loins. His food consisted of locusts and wild honey. Coming forth, then, he appeared in the country about the Jordan baptising, and preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins; and wherever he passed he ceased not to warn his hearers: "Do penance; for the kingdom of God is at hand." The inhabitants of Jerusalem and of Judaea flocked to him, and were baptised by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

When John saw the Pharisees and the Sadducees among the crowd, knowing their hypocrisy, he thus sternly rebuked them: "Ye brood of vipers, who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruit worthy of penance. And think not to say within yourselves: We have Abraham for our father; for I tell you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree, therefore, that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down and cast intothe fire."

And the people asked him: "What then shall we do?" John answered: "He that hath two coats, let him give to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do in like manner." The publicans* also came to be baptised, and asked: "Master, what shall we do?" But he said to them: "Do nothing more than that which is appointed you." And the soldiers also asked him, saying: "And what shall we do?" John replied: "Do violence to no man, neither calumniate any man; and be content with your pay."

It was then generally believed among the Jews that the time for the appearance of the Messias was come, and many began to think that John must be He. But he said to them: "I indeed baptise you with water unto penance, but there shall come One mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose. He shall baptise

* By "publicans" is here meant the collectors of the taxes that were raised to pay the Roman tribute.

you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly cleanse His floor and gather His wheat into the barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire" (Matt. iii.; Mark i.; Luke iii.).

The baptism of John was not a Sacrament, but an external profession of penance, to which was added the confession of sins: "And they were baptised in the Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matt. iii. 6). The words of John, too, go to show this: "I baptise you with water unto penance, but He that shall come after me . . . shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost" (Matt. iii. 11). Now without this baptism of the Holy Ghost there can be no remission of sins. And we find that St. Paul, when he was at Ephesus, baptised those who had already received the baptism of John (Acts xix. 4, 5).

CHAPTER IX

CHRIST IS BAPTISED BY JOHN AND TEMPTED BY THE DEVIL

Not to lose an opportunity of teaching humility by placing Himself among sinners, our Lord came from Nazareth to the Jordan to be baptised by John. But John stayed Him, saying: "I ought to be baptised by Thee, and comest Thou to me?" Jesus answered: "Suffer it to be so now; for so it becometh us to fulfil all justice." John resisted no longer; and when Jesus, after being baptised, came out of the water, lo, the heavens were opened, the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove descended upon Him, and at the same time there came a Voice from heaven, saying: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Immediately after His baptism He was led by the Spirit into the desert, where, "alone with the wild beasts," He fasted forty days and forty nights. Then He was hungry, and the devil came to tempt Him.

To discover if He were truly the Son of God, as was declared at His baptism, the tempter appeared to Him, and said: "If Thou be the Son of God, *command* that these stones be made bread." Now if Christ of His own authority had done this, Satan would have instantly concluded that He was the Son of God, since only God could effect such a miracle. But our Saviour answered him: "Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God."

The devil then led Him to the Holy City, and setting Him on one of the pinnacles of the Temple, said: "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down, for it is written: That He hath given His angels charge over Thee, and in their hands shall they bear Thee up, lest perhaps Thou dash Thy foot against a stone." Jesus answered: "It is written: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

To try our Saviour a third time, Satan took Him up into a very high mountain and showed Him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world, and their magnificence, and said to Him: "All these will

I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me." Jesus said to him: "Begone, Satan, for it is written: The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve." Then the devil left Him, and angels came and ministered to Him (Matt. iii., iv.; Mark i.; Luke iv.).

CHAPTER X

JOHN'S TESTIMONY

LIKE the Baptist, our Saviour did not begin His public ministry till after He had attained the age of thirty. Leaving the wilderness, He passed a few days on the banks of the Jordan, thus affording His holy precursor an opportunity of bearing repeated testimony to Him and to His Divine mission.

In the meantime John continued to preach and baptise, and his disciples daily to increase. The Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, in doubt as to whether John himself might not be the Messias, or perhaps the prophet who was to announce Him, sent out a deputation of priests and Levites to ask him: "Who art thou?" He confessed that he was not the Christ. "What then?" they asked. "Art thou Elias?" He answered that he was not. "Art thou the prophet?" they urged. "No," replied John. "Who, then, art thou," they persisted, "that we may give an answer to them that sent us? What sayest thou of thyself?" To this he replied: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the Prophet Isaias." Even yet they were not satisfied, but demanded: "Why then dost thou baptise, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet?" John answered: "I baptise with water; but there hath stood One in the midst of you whom you know not. The same is He that shall come after me, who is preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose." His questioners then withdrew; nor did they venture any further inquiry. This took place in Bethania, over against Jericho, at one of the fords of the Jordan where John was baptising.

The next day John saw our Saviour coming towards him, and seized the occasion to let the Jews know who He was. "Behold," he exclaimed, "the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world. This is He of whom I said: After me there cometh a Man who is preferred before me, because He was before me. I saw the Spirit coming down as a dove from heaven, and He remained upon Him. And I knew Him not; but He who sent me to baptise with water said to me: He upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, He it is that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw; and I give testimony that this is the Son of God."

On the following day, as John stood with two of his disciples and saw Jesus pass by them, he said: "Behold the Lamb of God." They were so struck with his words that they parted company with their master to go after Jesus, and became his first disciples (John i.).

CHAPTER XI

CHRIST'S FIRST DISCIPLES—THE MARRIAGE AT CANA

The two disciples of the Baptist whom we have seen leaving John to follow Christ, were Andrew, a native of Bethsaida, and St. John the Evangelist. When Jesus turned and saw them following Him, He asked: "What seek you?" They said to Him: "Rabbi [*i.e.* master], where dwellest Thou?" Jesus answered: "Come and see." They went with Him and saw where He abode, and stayed with Him that day.

After leaving our Saviour, Andrew went to seek his brother Simon and brought him to Jesus, saying: "We have found the Messias." Jesus, fixing His gaze upon Simon, said: "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas"—a word meaning Peter or Rock.

The day after this, when our Lord, accompanied by Peter, Andrew, and John, was preparing for His departure to Galilee, He met with Philip, who, like Peter and Andrew, was a native of Bethsaida, and invited him also to accompany Him. Philip not only responded to the call himself, but went eagerly to seek his friend Nathanael, afterwards known as Bartholomew, a native of Cana in Galilee. Full of joy, Philip said to Nathanael: "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write, Jesus, the Son of Joseph of Nazareth." Nathanael said to him: "Can anything of good come from Nazareth?" Philip answered: "Come and see." As soon as Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards Him, He said to those about Him: "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile." Nathanael said to Him: "Whence knowest Thou me?" Jesus said to him: "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." Then did Nathanael exclaim: "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." Jesus said to him: "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, thou believest: greater things than these shalt thou see. Amen, amen, I say to you, you shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

On the second day after the call of Nathanael there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee to which Jesus was invited with His disciples; and Mary, His mother, was also present at the marriage. It was perhaps the unexpected arrival of many extra guests that was the cause of a painful embarrassment to the bride and bridegroom, for during the festivities the wine ran short. When Mary saw this, she was distressed, and drew her Son's attention to the fact. "Woman," He said, "what is it to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come." But Mary was not discouraged, and she said to the waiters: "Whatever He shall say to you, do ye."

Now there were in the room six stone pitchers, large enough to contain two or three measures apiece, and intended for the purpose

of religious purification. At a word from our Lord the waiters filled these with water to the brim. "Draw out now," He said, "and carry to the chief steward of the feast." But when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, unconscious of the miracle that had been wrought, he said to the bridegroom: "Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. But thou hast kept the good wine until now." This, the first miracle that our Lord performed in public, served to manifest His glory and to confirm the belief of His disciples in Him (John i., ii.).

PART III

FIRST YEAR OF CHRIST'S PUBLIC MINISTRY

CHAPTER XII

THE MONEY-CHANGERS DRIVEN FROM THE TEMPLE—NICODEMUS

THE marriage at Cana concludes what may be termed the introduction to our Lord's public ministry; and now we come to what was really His public life, an epoch most fittingly begun at Jerusalem and at the Feast of the Passover.

Soon after the miracle recorded in the last chapter, our Saviour, with His mother, His brethren, and His five disciples, went down to Capharnaum, a town situated to the north-west of the Sea of Galilee, and there He remained a few days. From Capharnaum He went to Jerusalem, as the Feast of the Pasch was at hand.

Entering the Temple, and seeing within the sacred precincts those that sold oxen and sheep and doves for the sacrifices, and the money-changers seated at their tables, He was filled with zeal for the honour and respect due to His Father's House. He therefore made a scourge of little cords, and with this drove out the traffickers, the sheep also and the oxen. The money-changers He drove without the gates, overturned their tables, and scattered their money upon the floor. To those who sold doves He turned and said: "Take these things hence, and make not the House of My Father a house of traffic." The disciples now remembered that it was written: "The zeal of Thy House hath eaten Me up" (Ps. lxviii. 10).

Yet His act did not go unchallenged. The Jews asked: "What sign dost Thou show us, seeing that Thou dost these things?" Jesus answered: "*Destroy* this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up." They said to Him: "Six and forty years was this Temple in building, and wilt Thou raise it up in three days?" Now this He said of the Temple of His body. His words, however, were taken in another sense by many of His hearers, and three years later were brought against Him in a changed form by false witnesses when they accused him of saying: "*I am able to destroy* the Temple of God, and after three days to rebuild it" (Matt. xxvi. 61).

Our Saviour remained in Jerusalem till the Feast was over, and by His many miracles won numerous converts. Among these was Nicodemus, a ruler in Israel, who, for fear of the Jews, came to Him by night and said to Him: "Rabbi, we know that Thou art come a teacher from God; for no man can do these things which Thou dost unless God be with him." Jesus replied: "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

To the question of Nicodemus, "How can a man be born again when he is old?" our Saviour made answer: "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. If I have spoken to you earthly things, and you believe not, how will you believe if I shall speak to you heavenly things? No man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. He that believeth in Him is not judged; but he that doth not believe is already judged, because he believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God" (John ii., iii.).

After the Feast of the Passover our Saviour went with His Galilean disciples into the country districts of Judaea, where He drew after Him many faithful followers, who were baptised, not by Himself, but by His disciples (John iv. 2).

CHAPTER XIII

FURTHER TESTIMONY OF JOHN

At this time John was baptising at Enon, close by Salem, near the borders of Galilee and Samaria. Here his disciples came to him and said: "Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to whom thou gavest testimony, behold He baptiseth, and all men come to Him." John said to them: "You yourselves do bear me witness that I said: I am not Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from heaven is above all. The Father loveth the Son, and He hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth in the Son hath life everlasting; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Here we see the deep humility of John. He about whom they inquire is the Bridegroom, while he himself is the friend of the Bridegroom, sent before to announce His coming to the bride, His Church. He is even happy to see his followers desert him to run to Christ: "He must increase, but I must decrease."

When it came to the knowledge of John that Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee, regardless of the scandal he was giving, had married Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, who was still living, he suddenly appeared in Galilee, and coming before Herod, boldly reproved him for his wickedness, saying: "It is not lawful for thee to have her." Now Herod revered John; but instigated by the shame-

less Herodias, he seized him and cast him into prison. For her sake he would have put him to death, were it not that he feared the people, who esteemed John as a prophet (John iii.; Matt. xiv.; Mark vi. Luke iii.).

CHAPTER XIV

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

After John had been cast into prison, our Saviour left Judaea and chose Galilee as the first scene of His preaching, the place assigned to Him by the ancient prophets. He took the direct route northwards, and passing through the country of Samaria, came to a city named Sichar, situated near Jacob's Well. It was about the sixth hour when, wearied with His journey, He sat by the well while His disciples went into the city to buy food.

He had not been there long before a woman came to draw water. Jesus said to her: "Give Me to drink." Surprised at His request, she asked: "How dost Thou, being a Jew, ask of me to drink, who am a Samaritan woman?" He answered: "If thou didst know the gift of God, and who He is that saith to thee: Give Me to drink; thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." "Sir, Thou hast nothing wherein to draw," she replied, "and the well is deep; from whence then hast Thou living water? Art Thou greater than our father Jacob who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children and his cattle?" Jesus said to her: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst for ever. But the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting." Then she said: "Sir, give me this water that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw."

Changing His discourse, Jesus said to her: "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." "I have no husband," answered the woman. "Thou hast answered well," He replied, "in saying, I have no husband, for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband." "Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet," she said. "Our fathers adored on this mountain, and you say that at Jerusalem is the place where men must adore." Jesus said to her: "Woman, believe Me that the hour cometh when you shall neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, adore the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth." "I know," she replied, "that the Messias cometh (who is called Christ); therefore when He is come, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her: "I am He who am speaking with thee." Then the woman, leaving her water-pot, hastened back into the town, calling to everyone whom she met: "Come and see a man who has told me all things whatsoever I have done. Is not He the Christ?" In the meantime the disciples returned and besought our Saviour to eat; but He said to them: "I have food to eat

which you know not of. My food is to do the will of Him that sent Me."

While He was yet speaking with His disciples, many of the Samaritans came out of the city to see who it was of whom the woman had spoken; and at their earnest entreaty He remained two days in their city. When at length He departed, they said to the woman: "We now believe, not for thy saying, for we ourselves have heard Him, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world" (John iv.).

CHAPTER XV

HEALING OF THE RULER'S SON—JESUS AT NAZARETH

AFTER the two days spent at Sichar our Saviour resumed His journey from Samaria to Galilee, and again came to Cana where He had changed the water into wine.

Now there was at Capharnaum an officer of Herod's court whose son was lying dangerously ill. This courtier set off at once for Cana, and besought our Lord to come down without delay to Capharnaum to heal his son. Jesus said to him: "Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not." The man was not discouraged, but pleaded: "Lord, come down before that my son die." Pleased with the man's faith, our Lord said to him: "Go thy way; thy son liveth." The man believed and went his way.

He did not reach Capharnaum till the next day; but as he drew near to his house he was met by his servants, who greeted him with the glad tidings of his son's recovery. To his inquiry, at what hour the child grew better, they answered: "Yesterday, at the seventh hour the fever left him." The father knew that it was at the very time that Jesus had said to him, "Thy son liveth;" and himself believed, and his whole house.

Our Lord passed through Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and healing all manner of diseases among the people. On the Sabbath days He taught in the synagogues, and on a certain Sabbath came into the synagogue at Nazareth, where He had been brought up. The Book of Isaias was handed to Him, and unfolding it, He found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; wherefore He hath anointed Me. He hath sent Me to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart, to announce deliverance to the captives and sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of reward." When He had folded the Book, He returned it and sat down; and the eyes of all were upon Him.

But when He pointed out to them that the words of Isaias were that day fulfilled in Himself, they were struck with astonishment, and said one to another: "Is not this the Son of Joseph?" "Doubtless," He answered, "you will say to Me this similitude: Physician, heal thyself; as great things as we have heard done in Capharnaum, do also here in thy own country. Amen, I say to you that no prophet

is accepted in his own country. There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elias, when there was a great famine throughout all the land; and to none of them was Elias sent, but to a widow of Sarepta of Sidon. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Eliseus; and none of them was cleansed but Naaman the Syrian."

All who heard Him speak thus in the synagogue were filled with anger. They rose up in a fury, and seizing Him, hurried Him along to the brow of the hill whereon the city was built, with the intention of casting Him down headlong; but here some superhuman power held fast their arms, and He passed through the midst of them. Leaving Nazareth, He now took up his abode at Capharnaum (John iv.; Luke iv.).

CHAPTER XVI

JESUS AT CAPHARNAUM—HEALS THE DEMONIAC—CURES PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW

On a certain occasion when our Saviour was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw the two brothers, Simon, whom He had surnamed Peter, and Andrew, casting their nets into the sea, for they were fishermen; and He said to them: "Come after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." At once leaving everything, they followed him.

A little farther on He saw two other brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, in a ship with their father mending their nets; and He called them. They forthwith left their nets and their father with his hired men, and followed Him.

At Capharnaum our Saviour taught in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and all were in admiration at His doctrine; for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes and the Pharisees. Now there was in the synagogue a man possessed of an unclean spirit, and he cried with a loud voice: "Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God." But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and bade him hold his peace and go out of the man. Immediately the demon, crying with a loud voice, threw the man on the ground in their midst and left him, without doing him any injury. There came a great fear upon all, and they said one to another: "What word is this, for with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they go out?" And the fame of Him was spread forthwith into all the country of Galilee.

Leaving the synagogue, our Lord next went to the house of Simon and Andrew, where Simon's mother-in-law lay ill of a raging fever. The friends of the sick woman were grouped about her bed, and as Jesus entered, they earnestly besought Him on her behalf. Drawing near to her, He commanded the fever, and it left her. And immediately she rose up and ministered to them.

After sunset that same evening, when word of this other miracle

had been noised through the city, people brought to Him their sick and many that were possessed by devils, and He healed them, but would not allow the evil spirits to declare that they knew Him to be the Christ.

Early the next morning, whilst Capharnaum was still hushed in sleep, our Saviour left the city and went into the desert place, where He wished to pray alone. The people sought Him on every side; and when at last His disciples found Him and told Him how everyone was looking for Him, He said: "Let us go into the neighbouring towns and cities that I may preach there also; for to this purpose am I come." He accordingly went through Galilee, preaching in the synagogues, and healing the sick and the possessed. The fame of His teaching spread into all Syria, and great multitudes came to Him (Matt. iv., viii.; Mark i.; Luke iv.).

CHAPTER XVII

MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES—A LEPER HEALED

One day when our Saviour was standing by the lake of Genesareth, such numbers crowded round Him to hear the word of God that, the better to be able to address them, He sought a position from which to speak to them on the lake itself.

He saw two boats drawn up on the shore, while the owners were engaged some little distance off in washing their nets. One of the boats belonged to Simon Peter, and into this Jesus entered, desiring its owner to push off a little from the land. He then sat down, and from the boat taught the multitudes assembled on the shore.

When He had finished His discourse, He said to Peter: "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." Peter answered: "Master, we have laboured all the night and have taken nothing; but at Thy word I will let down the net." No sooner had they done this than they enclosed such a multitude of fishes that their net began to break as they drew it in, and they were obliged to call to their partners, the owners of the other boat, to come to their aid. They came; and so great was the number of fishes they drew up that the ships were filled and were almost sinking. On seeing this, Peter cast himself at the feet of our Saviour, saying: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Jesus said to him: "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." They then brought their ships to land, and, once for all, leaving all things they followed Him.

When our Saviour was approaching a certain city, a man stricken with leprosy ran to Him, and cast himself at His feet, saying: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." Touched with the man's faith, and moved with pity, our Lord stretched forth His hand and laid it upon him, saying: "I will: be thou cleansed," and immediately the leprosy left him. Then, to show that He had come not to destroy but to fulfil the Law, Jesus bade him go and show himself to the

priest, and make the offering appointed by Moses " for a testimony unto them " (Lev. xiv. 4). Although our Saviour bade the man tell the miracle to no one, he nevertheless published the news on every hand, and such numbers flocked to our Saviour in consequence that He was compelled to remain outside the cities, in the wilderness (Matt. viii.; Mark i.; Luke v.).

CHAPTER XVIII

JESUS HEALS A PARALYTIC—CALL OF MATTHEW

Our Saviour's return to Capharnaum, after a few days, was marked by a still more striking incident in the healing of the paralytic. When His arrival became known, such numbers crowded to hear His word that when a man, stricken with the palsy and too infirm to leave his bed, was carried to the house where He was, the four men who bore him were unable to approach the door. Not discouraged, however, they ascended to the flat roof of the house, and, after removing some of the tiles, let the sick man down into the room where our Saviour was.

Seeing their faith, He was moved to show mercy, and said to the man: " Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee." But some of the Scribes and the Pharisees who were present said within themselves: "He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Jesus, who knew their thoughts, said to them: " Why do you think evil in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say: Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say: Arise and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins: Arise," He said, turning to the man sick of the palsy, " take up thy bed and go into thy house." Immediately the man rose up, and taking the bed on which he had lain, went away in the sight of all. And they that saw it were filled with admiration, and glorified God who had given such power to man. " Wonderful things," they said, " have we seen this day."

When our Saviour passed thence to the lake, He saw Matthew, or Levi, the son of Alpheus, sitting in the custom-house, where, as a publican, he was collecting the taxes; and He said to him: " Follow Me." Matthew rose up and promptly obeyed the call. Soon afterwards he made a feast at his house, to which he invited our Saviour and His disciples, and at which also were present many publicans and sinners. The Scribes and Pharisees murmured at this, and said to the disciples of our Lord: " Why doth your Master eat and drink with publicans and sinners?" Hearing their complaints, Jesus said to them: " They that are whole need not the physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the just but sinners to repentance."

They then said to Him: " Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and the disciples of the Pharisees in like manner; but Thine eat and drink?" " Can you," He said, " make the children of the bridegroom fast whilst the bridegroom is with them?

But the day will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then shall they fast in those days."

He went on to compare His disciples to an old garment and to old bottles, and a strict mode of life to new cloth and new bottles; " No man seweth a piece of new cloth to an old garment; otherwise the new piecing taketh away from the old, and there is made a greater rent. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; otherwise the wine will burst the bottles, and both the wine will be spilled and the bottles will be lost. But new wine must be put into new bottles, and both are preserved. And no man drinking old wine hath presently a mind to new; for He saith: The old is better " (Matt. ix.; Mark ii.; Luke v.).

PART IV

SECOND YEAR OF CHRIST'S PUBLIC MINISTRY

CHAPTER XIX

CURE AT THE POOL OF BETHSAIDA

THE return of the Passover called our Saviour for the second time to Jerusalem. Now near the Sheep Gate was a pool called Probatica, or, in Hebrew, Bethsaida, surrounded by five porticoes, covered and arched, for the convenience of the sick and the cripples who remained waiting for the water to be set in motion; for an angel of the Lord went down at a certain time into the pool and the water was moved, after which the first to enter was cured of whatever infirmity he lay under.

On a certain Sabbath our Lord came near to the pool, and seeing there a man who had been lame for thirty-eight years, He said to him: "Wilt thou be made whole?" "Sir," he answered, "I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pond; for whilst I am coming, another goeth down before me." Jesus said to him: "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." At that same instant the man found himself healed, and did as he was commanded, though it was the Sabbath day. When the Jews blamed him for this, he told them that He who had healed him bade him do this. But who it was who had done so he knew not till our Saviour, who had disappeared amid the crowd, met him in the Temple and said to him: "Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee."

Straightway the man went, without any thought of harm, but rather out of gratitude, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had cured him. Desirous of bringing an accusation against our Saviour, the Jews charged Him with having broken the Sabbath. Jesus answered them: "My Father worketh until now, and I work." Hereupon they sought the more to put Him to death, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but said that God was His Father, thus making Himself equal to God.

Far from contradicting this conclusion, our Saviour went on openly to proclaim who He was: "Amen, amen, I say unto you, the Son cannot do anything of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing; for what things soever He doth, these the Son also doth in like manner. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things which Himself doth. As the Father raiseth up the dead and giveth life, so the Son also giveth life to whom He will. Neither doth the Father judge any man, but hath given all judgment to the Son. The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment. I seek

not My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. The works which the Father hath given Me to perfect give testimony of Me that the Father hath sent Me. But how can you believe who receive glory from one another, and the glory which is from God alone you do not seek? If you did believe Moses, you would perhaps believe Me also; for he wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" After this, Jesus once more turned in the direction of Galilee (John v.).

CHAPTER XX

CHRIST EXCUSES HIS DISCIPLES—HE CURES THE WITHERED HAND—THE TWELVE APOSTLES

It was while our Saviour was returning to Galilee, on the Sabbath following the Passover, that He and His disciples chanced to pass through a cornfield already ripe for the harvest. Pressed with hunger and fatigue, His disciples plucked some of the ears of corn, which they rubbed in their hands, and blowing away the chaff, began to eat.

Some of the Pharisees who had also followed Him with the intention of observing His conduct said to the disciples: "Why do you that which is not lawful on the Sabbath days?" But Jesus answering said: "Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry, and they that were with him: how he went into the house of God, under Abiathar the High Priest, and did eat the Loaves of Proposition, which it was not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave to them that were with him? Or have you not read in the Law that on the Sabbath days the priests in the Temple break the Sabbath, and are without blame? But I tell you that there is here a greater than the Temple. And if you knew what this meaneth: *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*, you would never have condemned the innocent. The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

On another occasion when our Saviour was teaching in the synagogue at Capharnaum on the Sabbath day, He saw a man who had a withered hand. The Pharisees watched Him to see if He would heal the man on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said to the man: "Arise, and stand forth in the midst." The man rose up and stood forth. Then Jesus said to them: "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy?" But they held their peace. Jesus said to them: "What man shall there be among you that hath one sheep; and if the same fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not take hold on it and lift it up? How much better is a man than a sheep. Therefore it is lawful to do a good deed on the Sabbath day." Then, grieving for their blindness of heart, He said to the man: "Stretch forth thy hand." The man did so, and it was restored to health even as the other.

The Pharisees were so moved with rage against Him that they

formed upon the spot a design to kill Him. But He, aware of their wicked intention, withdrew with His disciples to the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Yet even here a great multitude came to Him, and in such numbers did they press about Him that He desired His disciples to procure a small boat from which He might address them. All who suffered from any infirmity whatsoever pressed forward to touch Him, and He healed them.

After a day of wearisome labour our Saviour retired to a lonely mountain, where He spent the night in prayer; but as soon as the day began to dawn He called around Him His disciples, and choosing twelve of them to be Apostles, He gave them the power of curing maladies both of soul and body, and of expelling devils, that by the authority of miracles they might prove the truth of their doctrines.

The names of the Twelve were *Simon*, to whom He gave the surname of Peter—a word signifying rock—and *Andrew* his brother; *James* and *John*, the sons of Zebedee, whom He named Boanerges, or Sons of Thunder; *Philip* and *Bartholomew ; Matthew* and *Thomas; James*, the son of Alpheus; *Simon*, who is called Zelotes; *Jude*, the brother of James; and *Judas Iscariot*, who was the traitor (Matt. x., xii.; Mark ii., iii.; Luke vi.).

CHAPTER XXI

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

After our Lord had chosen the Twelve, He went down with His disciples to a more extended and even part of the mountain, where a large crowd of people had assembled to hear Him, and in that beautiful discourse known as the Sermon on the Mount He thus addressed them:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

"Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Be glad in that day and rejoice; for behold, your reward is very great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets that were before you."

He then goes on to style His hearers in general, but His Apostles in particular, the salt of the earth, and asks them, "if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing any more but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men." "You are the light of the world," He continued. "A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a

bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house. So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

"Think not," He said, "that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I am come not to destroy, but to fulfil; for amen I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the Law, till all be fulfilled. He therefore that shall teach the commandments, and fulfil them, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. If your justice abound not more than that of the Scribes and the Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

"You have heard that it was said to them of old: *Thou shalt not kill;* and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother; and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift."

So, too, with the sin of *adultery*. He who does but indulge in impure thoughts and desires is guilty before God. "I say to you that whoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart"

Again, *perjury* was forbidden: "You have heard that it was said: Thou shalt not forswear thyself. But I say to you not to swear at all. Let your speech be yea, yea; no, no. That which is over and above these is of evil."

Next come His commands regarding *fraternal charity*: "You have heard that it hath been said: Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy. But I say to you: Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven. For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? do not even the publicans do this? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? do not also the heathens this? Be you therefore perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect."

Our actions must be done with a *pure intention*: "Take heed that you do not your justice before men that you may be seen by them, otherwise you shall not have a reward from your Father who is in heaven. When thou dost give an alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth, that thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father, who seeth in secret, will repay thee." Hypocrisy, then, in almsgiving is to be avoided, as well as in prayer and fasting; yet He does not forbid the doing of good works openly for the glory of God and the edification of our neighbour: "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. v., vi.; Luke vi.).

CHAPTER XXII

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (Concluded)

Our Saviour next taught His disciples that most excellent of all prayers, the "Our Father," to show what ought to be the object of all the Christian's desires. The principal subject of our prayers and the end of our every action ought to be the honour and glory of God, the establishment of God's kingdom, and the accomplishment of the Divine will in every part of the world. For ourselves we are to ask for our daily bread; not only the bread that maintains and supports our bodies, but more especially the supernatural support of the grace of God and the true Bread of Eternal Life, the Holy Eucharist, in which is received the very Author of grace Himself. We are taught to pray for the forgiveness of our sins, which will be granted on the condition that we first of all forgive others the injuries they have done to us: "For if you forgive men their offences your Heavenly Father will also forgive you your offences." Finally, we are to pray that God will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength—that is, that He will remove the temptation or enable us to overcome it: "And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil."

Our longing is not to be for earthly treasures: "But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

Our intention, which is the light of our actions, must be upright and pure and directed towards God: "If thy eye [which is the light of the body] be dim, thy whole body shall be darksome; but if thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome."

No man can serve two masters, "for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will sustain the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." The final object of our actions, then, must be either for this life or the next.

He would not have us be anxious about the things of this world: "Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labour not, neither do they spin; but I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe, how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be not solicitous, therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For your Heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

We must refrain from judging or condemning others rashly: "Judge not that you may not be judged; for with what judgment

you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." He who sees the mote (*light faults*) in the eye of another must not forget the beam (*grievous faults*) in his own.

Our Saviour after that comes to speak of the necessity of prayer, assuring us that our petitions will be heard: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Or what man is there among you, of whom if his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone? Or if he shall ask him a fish, will he reach him a serpent? If you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?"

He once again reminded His hearers of the necessity of charity towards one's neighbour, and summed up our duty in regard to him in this golden rule: "All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets."

He exhorted them to enter in by the narrow gate, "for wide is the gate, and broad is the road that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life; and few there are that find it."

He warned them against false teachers. "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."

He then concluded by likening one who attended to His words to a wise man who built his house upon a rock. "The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock." But he who heeded not His words was to be likened to a man who built his house upon sand, which, when the flood came, perished, and great was the fall thereof. Now when He had ended these words, the people were in admiration at His doctrine (Matt. vi., vii.; Luke vi.).

CHAPTER XXIII

JESUS HEALS THE CENTURION'S SERVANT—HE RAISES THE WIDOW'S SON TO LIFE

Our Lord now returned to Capharnaum, where He was met by some of the elders of the Jews, who had been sent by a certain Roman centurion to ask Him to come and heal his favourite servant, who was lying stricken with paralysis. "He is worthy that Thou shouldst do this for him," they said; "For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue."

At their request our Saviour set out immediately for the centurion's house. Great was the surprise of the centurion on learning this;

and so overcome was he with a sense of his own unworthiness that he sent forward some of his friends to meet our Lord, and to beg Him not to trouble Himself so far as to visit him. "I am not worthy," he said, "that thou shouldst enter under my roof; say but the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers; and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doth it." Turning to those about Him, Jesus said "Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith even in Israel." He then bade the messengers return, and as the centurion had believed so was it done unto him. On reaching the house they found that the servant had been restored to health at the moment they had been bidden to return.

After this our Lord, accompanied by His disciples and a great number of people, went to Naim; and as He drew near to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was being carried out for burial, the only son of his mother, who was a widow. Touched with sorrow for her great loss, many people had come to join in the solemn procession. Our Lord, too, was moved with compassion for the desolate mother, and said to her: "Weep not." He then came near and touched the bier; and they that carried it stood still. "Young man," He exclaimed, "I say to thee, arise." Instantly the youth rose and began to speak, and He delivered him to his mother. And there came a great fear upon all, and they glorified God, saying: "A great Prophet is risen among us, and God hath visited His people" (Matt. viii.; Luke vii.).

CHAPTER XXIV

THE BAPTIST'S MESSAGE TO CHRIST

It is about this time that we have the last mention of John the Baptist before his death. He had been in prison for the greater part of a year, but had not been prevented from seeing his disciples, who told him of the wonderful works performed by our Saviour. To convince his followers that Jesus, and not himself, was the true Messias, he selected two whom he sent to our Lord to ask: "Art Thou He who is to come, or look we for another?"

The two duly gave their master's message; but before our Lord undertook to reply to their question, He performed on the spot various kinds of miracles: "In that same hour He cured many of their diseases, and hurts, and of evil spirits; and to many that were blind He gave sight." Then He said: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen; the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, to the poor the gospel is preached; and blessed is he that shall not be scandalised in Me." Thus, in proof that He was the Messias, He pointed to the miracles which Isaias had foretold would mark the coming of the Messias.

When the messengers had departed, our Saviour spoke to the multitude concerning John, and asked: "What went ye out into the

desert to see? a reed shaken with the wind? or a man clothed in soft garments? But they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings. Or was it a prophet? Yea, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written: Behold I send My angel before Thy face who shall prepare Thy way before Thee. For I say to you: Amongst those that are born of woman there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist."

He then went on to speak of the kingdom of heaven, and told His hearers that it was to be obtained only by doing violence to ourselves, by mortification and penance, and by resisting our evil inclinations. He upbraided the cities wherein were done the greater part of His miracles: "Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee, Bethsaida, for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capharnaum, shalt thou be exalted up to heaven? Thou shalt go down even unto hell; for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom that have been done in thee, perhaps it would have remained to this day."

He gave thanks to His Heavenly Father that He had hidden Divine wisdom from the worldly wise and prudent, and had revealed it to the humble: "Yea, Father; for so it hath seemed good in Thy sight." He then called on all to follow Him, saying: "Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart; and you shall find rest to your souls; for My yoke is sweet and My burden light" (Matt. xi.; Luke vii.).

CHAPTER XXV

JESUS PARDONS THE PENITENT MAGDALENE

THAT same day, at Naïm, our Saviour was invited by a Pharisee, named Simon, to a banquet. And while He was at table, a certain woman who was known to be a sinner stole behind the couch on which He was reclining, and began to wash His feet with her tears and to wipe them with her hair. Then, taking an alabaster box of precious ointment which she had brought with her, she kissed His feet and anointed them with the ointment.

When the Pharisee who had invited Him saw what was done, he said within himself: "This man, if He were a prophet, would know surely who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him, that she is a sinner." But Jesus, knowing his thoughts, said to him: "Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee. A certain creditor had two debtors, the one owed him five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And whereas they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which therefore of the two loveth him most?" Simon answered: "I suppose he to whom he forgave most." Jesus said to him: "Thou hast judged rightly."

He then turned to the woman and said to Simon: "Dost thou see

this woman? I entered into thy house: thou gavest Me no water for my feet; but she with tears hath washed My feet, and with her hair hath wiped them. Thou gavest Me no kiss; but she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she with ointment hath anointed My feet. Wherefore I say to thee: many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much. But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less." Then He said to the woman: "Thy sins are forgiven thee. Go in peace; thy faith hath made thee safe." They that sat at table began to say within themselves: "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" (Luke vii.).

CHAPTER XXVI

JESUS HEALS THE BLIND AND DUMB DEMONIAC —THE PHARISEES ASK FOR A SIGN

Our Saviour made a second missionary journey through Galilee attended by the Twelve and certain devout women whom He had delivered from evil spirits or other infirmities, and who now ministered to Him out of their substance.

On His return to Capharnaum He was besieged by so great a crowd that He and His disciples could not so much as find time to eat. When His kindred heard of this, they were very angry and would have laid hands upon Him, for they said: "He is become mad." But when they came to seize Him, they were unable to force their way into the house in which He was, on account of the dense throngs of people, whose enthusiasm had been further stirred by the cure of one possessed who had been both blind and dumb. The people were amazed, and asked: "Is not this the Son of David?"

But some of the Pharisees who had accompanied Him accused Him of casting out devils through Beelzebub, the prince of devils. Jesus said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you." He showed them that the strong could be overcome only by one stronger, that the kingdom of God was in opposition to the kingdom of Satan, and that it was necessary to choose either the one or the other: "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth."

"Every sin," He continued, "and every blasphemy shall be forgiven; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven either in this world or in the world to come. The tree is known by its fruit. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of a good treasure bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of an evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word that

men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment."

Some of the Scribes and the Pharisees said to Him: "Master, we would see a sign from thee." Jesus said to them: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign; and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights, so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights." The time would come, He told them, when the people of Ninive should rise up in judgment against them, and when the Queen of Saba should condemn them for their unbelief, for the former, at the preaching of Jonas, had done penance, while she had come from afar to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon was there, and greater things were done for them.

He then taught them to what evil a man exposed himself who, after doing penance, fell back again into sin. Instead of one evil spirit seven more wicked still would come and take possession of that soul that had been adorned and purified.

While He was yet speaking to the people, someone said to Him: "Behold Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, seeking Thee." But He pointing to His faithful followers, exclaimed: "Behold My mother and My brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother, My sister, and My mother." He then left the house, and going down to the lake sat down by the shore (Matt. xii.; Mark iii.; Luke viii., xi.).

CHAPTER XXVII

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

We now find our Saviour by the shore of the Sea of Galilee, where a great multitude had collected to hear His word. That He might the more conveniently address them, He sat down in one of the fishing-boats lying close to the shore, and from it taught them in parables.

He began with the *Parable of the Sower*. "Behold the sower went forth to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the way-side, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And other some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it, choked it. And other some fell upon good ground; and being sprung up, yielded fruit a hundredfold. . . . He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Another parable He proposed to them, that of the *Wheat and the Cockle*. "The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and had brought forth fruit, there appeared also the cockle. And the servants of the good man of the house coming said to him: Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy

field? Whence then has it cockle? He said to them: An enemy hath done this. The servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? But he said to them: No, lest perhaps, gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn."

He next proposed to them the parable of the *Seed which groweth secretly*. "The kingdom of God is as if a man should cast good seed into the earth, and should sleep, and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow whilst he knoweth not; for the earth of itself bringeth forth fruit, first the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear. And when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come," by which He would show them that, as with the sower, so was it with him who announced the kingdom of heaven. For whether he sleep or rise, the seed will grow up while he knoweth not; and the well-prepared soil will, by the blessing of God, be productive.

A further parable, that of the *Mustard Seed*, He gave them, saying: "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God, or to what parable shall we compare it? It is as a grain of mustard seed which, when it is sown in the earth, is the least of all the seeds that are in the earth; and when it is sown, it groweth up and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches, so that the birds of the air may dwell under the shadow thereof."

Still another parable, the *Parable of the Leaven*, He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened."

Of the eight parables, all spoken by our Lord on the same day, it is commonly supposed that the five mentioned above were addressed to all that were assembled on the seashore, and that the other three were added by Him when He was alone with the Apostles in the house (Matt. xiii.; Mark iv.; Luke viii.).

CHAPTER XXVIII

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD (Continued)

AFTER our Saviour had finished speaking and had returned to the house, He was asked by the Twelve: "Why speakest Thou to them in parables?" He answered: "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but to them it is not given. For he that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound; but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath. Therefore do I speak to them in parables; because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For, amen I say to you, many prophets and just men have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear

the things that you hear, and have not heard them. Hear ye, therefore, the parable of the *Sower*.

" The seed is the word of God; and they by the wayside are they that hear; then the devil cometh and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing they should be saved. Now they upon the stony ground are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no roots; for they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they who have heard, and going their way are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit. But that on the good ground are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience." He also gave them to understand that they were not to bury in silence the instruction and examples which He gave them, but that they were to exercise them for the light and direction of others: " For no man lighting a candle covereth it with a vessel, but setteth it upon a candlestick, that they who come in may see the light."

To their request that He would explain to them the parable of the *Cockle*, He answered: " He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man. The field is the world, the good seed are the children of the kingdom, the cockle are the children of the wicked one, and the enemy that sowed it is the devil. But the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels. Even as the cockle, therefore, is gathered up and burnt with fire, so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all scandals, and such as work iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." As a further explanation of what He had already said, He spoke to them three other parables; yet many are of opinion that they were spoken before the whole multitude.

" The kingdom of heaven is like unto a *treasure hidden in a field*, which, when a man has found, he hideth, and for joy goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

" Again, the kingdom of heaven is like to *a merchant seeking good pearls;* who, when he had found one of great price, went his way and sold all that he had, and bought it.

" And again, the kingdom of heaven is like to *a net cast into the sea*, and gathering together of all kinds of fishes, which, when it was filled, they drew out, and sitting by the shore they chose out the good into vessels, but the bad they cast forth. So shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall separate the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire " (Matt. xiii.; Mark iv.; Luke viii.).

CHAPTER XXIX

JESUS STILLS THE TEMPEST—THE GERASENE DEMONIAC

THE same day, towards evening, our Saviour directed His disciples to sail with Him across the lake to its eastern shore. It was at this moment that a certain scribe drew near to Him and said: "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou shalt go." Jesus answered him: "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Another whom He bade follow Him replied: "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." Jesus answered him: "Follow Me, and let the dead bury the dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God."

During their passage across the lake so violent a storm arose that their ship was on the point of sinking; and our Lord was sleeping with His head resting upon a pillow in the hinder part of the ship. In their alarm the disciples came and awoke Him, exclaiming: "Lord, save us, we perish." Jesus said to them: "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?" Then rising up He rebuked the wind and the sea, saying: "Peace, be still." Immediately the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. All who saw the miracle were amazed, and said one to another: "What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey Him?"

Hardly were they landed on the east side of the lake, in the country of the Gerasenes or Gadarenes, when there met them a man possessed by devils. So much was he under the tyranny of Satan that he ran wild among the mountains, would wear no clothes, roved among the tombs howling pitifully both by night and by day, and cut himself with sharp stones. He could not be secured even with chains; for, though he had often been bound, he had broken his fetters in pieces, and defied all attempts at taming him.

As soon as he saw our Saviour approaching, he ran towards Him and fell down at His feet, crying out in a loud voice: "What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of the Most High? I adjure Thee in the name of God that Thou torment me not." When our Lord asked him his name, he replied: "My name is Legion; for we are many." And he besought Him not to drive him away out of the country, but to allow him to enter into a herd of swine that were feeding a little way off. Our Saviour granted his request; and no sooner did the devils enter into the swine than the whole herd, to the number of two thousand, ran headlong down the steep hillside, and plunging into the lake, perished.

The keepers fled to the city, where they told the news, and the excited people ran in haste to see what had been done. Great was their astonishment when they saw the man who had been possessed clothed and in his right mind, sitting at the feet of our Lord. And they besought our Lord to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear.

Just as He was preparing to recross the lake to Capharnaum, and was stepping into the boat, the man whom He had healed came to Him, and begged to be allowed to remain with Him; but our Saviour told him to return to his friends and tell them what great things the Lord had done for him, and how He had had mercy upon him; and all men wondered (Matt. viii.; Mark iv.; Luke viii.).

CHAPTER XXX

THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS RAISED TO LIFE— TWO BLIND MEN AND A DUMB DEMONIAC HEALED

When our Saviour arrived at Capharnaum, the people were waiting to receive Him. Among them was a ruler of the synagogue, named Jairus, who came and fell at His feet, and humbly entreated Him to come to his house, for his only daughter was lying at the point of death. Our Lord granted his request, and immediately followed him, accompanied by His disciples and a great concourse of people.

Now among these was a woman who for twelve years had had an issue of blood. She had spent all she possessed upon physicians, and after so many years of suffering found herself worse rather than better. But having heard of the wonderful works of our Saviour, she came behind Him merely to touch His garments; for she said: "If I shall touch but His garment I shall be healed." And so it proved. But He, knowing that virtue had proceeded from Him, immediately turned round to the people and asked who had touched Him. His disciples answered Him: "Seest Thou the multitude thronging Thee? and sayest Thou: Who touched Me?" But the woman, fearing and trembling, came and fell down at His feet, and declared before all the people how and of what she had been healed. Jesus said to her: "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace."

Meanwhile, messengers had come from Jairus's house to tell him that he need not trouble the Master any longer, as his daughter was already dead. But Jesus said to the ruler: "Fear not; only believe." And when He was come to the house, He would allow no one to enter with Him but Peter, James, and John, and the parents of the maiden.

The house was full of mourners; but our Saviour turned to them and said: "Why make you this ado? the damsel is not dead but sleepeth." And they laughed Him to scorn; for they knew that she was dead. He, however, compelled them to leave the house; and taking the maiden by the hand, called to her saying: "*Talitha, cumi,*" which means, "Damsel (I say to thee), arise." Immediately she rose up and walked. Although our Saviour bade them tell this to no one, yet the fame of the miracle went abroad into all the country.

After He had left the house of Jairus, there followed Him two blind men, who called to Him: "Have mercy on us, O Son of David."

When He had come to the house at which He was staying, the blind men approached Him and made the same request. "Believe you," He asked, "that I can do this unto you?" They say to Him: "Yea, Lord." Then He touched their eyes, saying: "According to your faith be it done unto you." Their eyes were opened, and they spread the story of their cure throughout all the country.

Hardly had they gone away when a dumb man possessed with a devil was brought to Him. He cast out the devil, and the dumb man spoke; whereupon the people in astonishment exclaimed: "Never was the like done in Israel."

It is probably at this time that our Lord made a further visit to Nazareth, and on the Sabbath day taught in the synagogue; but the reception He met with was little better than the one He had experienced on the occasion of His former visit. Because of the unbelief of His fellow-townsmen He worked but few miracles among them; yet some of their sick He cured by laying His hands upon them. Departing finally from Nazareth, He went through the villages round about teaching (Matt. ix., xiii.; Mark v., vi.; Luke viii.).

CHAPTER XXXI

MISSION OF THE TWELVE

Our Saviour, seeing the multitudes who had assembled from all parts to hear His word, had compassion on them, for they were as sheep without a shepherd. He said to His disciples: "The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He send forth labourers into His harvest."

Then did He call to Him the Twelve, and sending them two and two, gave them power to cast out devils, to heal diseases, to raise the dead, and to preach the kingdom of God, but forbade them to enter the country of the Gentiles or the cities of the Samaritans. They were not to look for any temporal reward, nor to have a care for their bodily wants, but to set out as those who have no more than what is necessary: "For," He said, "the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till ye go thence. And when you come into a house, salute it, saying: Peace be to this house. And if that house be worthy, your peace shall come upon it; but if it be not worthy, your peace shall return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, going forth out of that house or city, shake off even the dust from your feet for a testimony against them. Amen I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city.

"Behold I send you as sheep into the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and you shall be brought before governors and before kings for My sake. But when they shall deliver you up,

take no thought how or what to speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.

"And fear not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; better are ye than many sparrows.

"Every one therefore that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But he that shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

"He that loveth his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not up his cross and followeth Me is not worthy of Me.

"He that receiveth you receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth him that sent Me. And whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."

The Apostles then went forth, and preached that men should do penance. They cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them (Matt. ix., x.; Mark vi.; Luke ix.).

CHAPTER XXXII

DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

It was about this time that Herod, on the occasion of his birthday, gave a great supper to the princes and tribunes and chief men of Galilee. As we have already seen, he had imprisoned John the Baptist for the outspoken manner in which John had protested against his unlawful marriage with Herodias; and his words had never been forgotten by the wicked woman, who waited for an opportunity to gratify her revenge. It was to come this very night.

Her daughter, Salome, chanced to dance before Herod and his guests, and so pleased was he with her performance that he promised on oath to give her whatsoever she asked, even though it were the half of his kingdom. Before expressing her wish, Salome went to confer with her mother, who, seeing a way of venting her spite, bade her return and demand the head of John the Baptist. Again she presented herself before Herod and said to him: "I will that forthwith thou give me on a dish the head of John the Baptist."

The king was struck sad; yet because of his oath, and because of them that were with him at table, he would not displease her, but sent an executioner to behead John in prison. The Baptist's head was brought up on a dish to the king, who gave it to the damsel, and she to her mother. John's disciples reverently buried the body of their master, and coming to our Lord, told him all that had happened.

Now Herod, hearing all the things that were done by our Saviour, was in doubt because it was said by many that John was risen from the dead, by some that He was Elias, and by others that He was one of the ancient prophets (Matt. xiv.; Mark vi.; Luke ix.).

CHAPTER XXXIII

FIRST MULTIPLICATION OF THE LOAVES—JESUS WALKS ON THE WATERS

When the Twelve returned from their mission, they told our Saviour what they had taught and all the things they had done. And He said to them: "Come apart into a desert place, and rest a little." They accordingly got into a ship with Him, crossed the Sea of Galilee, and retired into the desert region of Bethsaida Julias. But great numbers who had seen them depart and wished to join them went round by the north end of the lake, followed by many others, and arrived at the desert before them. The feast of the Pasch was at hand.

At the sight of so great a crowd, our Saviour, moved with compassion, healed their infirmities, and spoke to them of the kingdom of heaven, for they were as sheep without a shepherd. He then said to Philip: "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" This He said to try him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him: "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one may take a little."

The day being now far spent, His disciples came to Him, saying: "This is a desert place, and the hour is now past; send the multitude away, that going into the next villages and towns, they may buy meat to eat." "They have no need to go," He answered; "give ye them to eat. How many loaves have ye?" Andrew said to Him: "There is a boy here that hath five barley-loaves and two fishes; but what are these among so many?"

Now there was much grass in the place, and our Saviour told His disciples to make the people sit down in groups of hundreds and fifties. In all there sat down five thousand men besides women and children.

Our Saviour then took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them and gave them to His disciples to distribute to the multitude. When they all had eaten and were filled, He bade His disciples gather up the fragments that remained, lest they should be lost, and it was found that the leavings filled twelve baskets.

Seeing the miracle that He had wrought, the people were filled with admiration, and exclaimed: "This is of a truth the Prophet that is to come into the world." But knowing that they had a mind to take Him forcibly and make Him their king, He withdrew from them, and bidding His disciples go before Him over the water to Bethsaida, He went up into the mountain alone to pray.

But when it grew dark, and the ship was well out to sea, a sudden

storm arose. The waters were lashed into fury; and in spite of all their efforts at the oars, the Apostles could not make headway against a contrary wind and the violence of the waves.

Suddenly they saw at some distance off what appeared to be a man walking upon the waters and coming towards them; but as he drew near, he made as though he would have passed them. Thinking it was a phantom they saw, they cried out in terror. But soon their fears were allayed when they heard the well-known voice of the Master: "It is I, fear ye not."

Full of faith and love, Peter exclaimed: "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters." At the word of our Saviour, he immediately stepped out of the vessel and began to walk upon the waves; but when he found the billows surging around him, he lost courage and forthwith began to sink. Terrified, he called aloud: "Lord, save me." Our Saviour, immediately stretching forth His hand, took hold of him and said: "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" They got into the ship and at once the wind ceased. The rest of those in the ship fell down at the feet of their Master and worshipped Him, saying: "Thou art truly the Son of God." The sea now became smooth, and the vessel was brought safely into harbour.

Our Saviour was recognised immediately, and presently the whole neighbourhood was in a state of commotion. Wherever He went the people brought their sick to Him, and as many as touched even the hem of His garment were made whole (Matt. xiv.; Mark vi.; Luke ix.; John vi.).

CHAPTER XXXIV

JESUS, THE LIVING BREAD

When the people who had remained on the eastern side of the lake found that our Saviour was not there, knowing that He had not crossed with His disciples, they believed that He must have set forth on His journey by land. In all haste they crossed the lake, and were astonished to find Him teaching in the synagogue at Capharnaum. "Rabbi," they exclaimed, "when camest Thou hither?"

"You seek Me," He answered, "not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of man will give you; for Him hath God the Father sealed."

"What shall we do," they asked, "that we may work the works of God?" He answered them: "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He hath sent."

They said to Him: "What sign therefore dost Thou show, that we may see, and may believe Thee? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written. He gave them bread from heaven to eat" (Ps. lxxvii. 24).

Then He said to them: "Amen, amen, I say to you: Moses gave

you not bread from heaven, but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world." "Lord," they said, "give us always this bread."

Jesus said to them: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall not hunger; and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst. I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the will of My Father that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth in Him, may have life everlasting, and I will raise him up in the last day."

The Jews then murmured because He had said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven," and they said among themselves: "Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then doth He say: I came down from heaven?"

Jesus said to them: "Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him. He that believeth in Me hath everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world."

"How," they asked, "can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

Then Jesus said to them: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day; for My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live for ever."

Many, therefore, even of His disciples, murmured and said: "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?"

But He said to them: "Doth this scandalise you? If then you shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you that believe not."

After this many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. He said to the Twelve: "Will you also go away?"

Simon Peter answering, said: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God" (John vi.).

PART V

THIRD YEAR OF CHRIST'S PUBLIC MINISTRY

CHAPTER XXXV

PHARISAICAL TRADITIONS—THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN

FEELING had gone so strong against our Lord in Jerusalem that He could not trust Himself to go there for the celebration of the Pasch.

Many of the Scribes and the Pharisees, who had followed Him merely for the purpose of watching Him and ensnaring Him in His words, came to Him on one occasion to find fault with His disciples, complaining that they had seen them sit down to table with unwashed hands, and asking Him why they did not walk according to the precepts and traditions of the ancients.

He answered them: "Well did Isaias prophesy of you hypocrites: This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain do they worship Me, teaching doctrines and precepts of men. Well do you make void the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition; for Moses said: Honour thy father and thy mother. But you say: Whosoever shall say to father or mother, The gift whatsoever proceedeth from me shall profit thee. And further, you suffer him not to do anything for his father or mother, making void the word of God by your own tradition. And many other such like things do you do."

Leaving Capharnaum, our Saviour withdrew into the neighbourhood of Tyre and Sidon, and, entering into a house, He wished His Apostles not to make known His presence. But the report of His arrival was soon spread abroad; and a certain Syrophoenician woman, whose daughter was troubled by an unclean spirit, went to Him, and falling down at His feet besought Him to come and heal her daughter.

At first He made no reply, but passed on. His disciples asked Him to send her away, for she continued to cry after Him. "I was not sent," He said, "but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel." Again she cried out: "Lord, help me." He answered her: "Suffer first the children to be filled; for it is not good to take the bread of the children and cast it to the dogs." "Yea, Lord," she said, "for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters."

He could resist no longer. "O woman," He said, "great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt." Full of joy, the poor mother hastened to her home to find that her daughter had been cured at that same hour.

Our Saviour next went down to Decapolis, the country lying to the south-east of the Sea of Galilee. Here the fame of His miracles had spread; and no sooner had the people heard of His coming than they brought to Him a deaf and dumb man and besought Him to lay His hands upon Him.

He took the man aside, put His finger into his ears, and with a little saliva touched his tongue. Then, with eyes raised heavenwards He groaned and said: "Ephpheta"—that is, "Be thou opened." Immediately the man's ears were opened, the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke aright. The people, filled with admiration, exclaimed: "He hath done all things well: He hath made the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak" (Matt. xv.; Mark vii.).

CHAPTER XXXVI

SECOND MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES

HAVING returned to the shores of the Sea of Galilee, our Saviour went up into a mountain and sat there. A great multitude of people came to Him and brought to Him the dumb, the blind, the lame, the maimed, and many others; and He healed them; so that the multitudes marvelled.

Jesus called His disciples and said to them: "I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way; for some of them came from afar off."

His disciples answered Him: "From whence can any one fill them here with bread in the wilderness?" To His question, How many loaves had they, they replied, "Seven."

Taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks, and broke, and gave to His disciples to set before them. They had also a few little fishes; and He blessed them, and commanded them to be set before them. And they did eat and were filled; and they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets. They that ate numbered four thousand men besides women and children; and He sent them away (Matt. xv.; Mark viii.).

Shortly afterwards our Saviour walked down to the shore, whence He sailed with His disciples over to Magedan (*Magdala*) into the district of Dalmanutha. Here He was met by a number of Pharisees and Sadducees who asked Him a sign from heaven, tempting Him. He, however, refused to gratify their curiosity, and answered them as He had answered on a similar occasion: "A sign shall not be given, but the sign of Jonas the prophet." He upbraided them for their wilful blindness; for while they knew how to make observations regarding the weather from the appearance of the sky, they neglected to notice the many signs which so plainly pointed Him out as the promised Messias. He then entered the ship and crossed to the other side of the lake (Matt. xvi.; Mark viii.).

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE BLIND MAN AT BETHSAIDA—PETER'S CONFESSION

ARRIVED on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, the disciples began to be concerned about food, when our Lord warned them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and of the leaven of Herod. Yet He explained to them that it was not of bread that He spoke, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees; or as St. Luke has it: "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (xii. 1). The Pharisees, as we have seen, had made the Word of God of no effect by their tradition. The Sadducees, by denying a future state, removed the foundations of the fear of God, while the Herodians were noted for a spirit of worldliness and ungodliness.

Our Saviour now passed on to Bethsaida Julias, where He healed a blind man. He took the poor sufferer by the hand, and led him out of the town that He might perform the cure unnoticed. Moistening the man's eyes with spittle, He laid His hands on them, and asked him if he saw anything. The man raised his eyes and answered: "I see men, as it were trees, walking." Our Saviour again touched his eyes and restored him to perfect sight, so that he saw all things clearly; and He bade him: "Go now into thy house, and if thou enter into the town, tell nobody."

Coming next to Caesarea Philippi, our Saviour asked His disciples what was the opinion of men with regard to Him, and whom they took Him to be. They said to Him: "Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." But on His asking whom *they* thought that He was, Peter, in the name of all, and without hesitation, answered: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."

After commanding His disciples not yet to declare that He was the Messias, He for the first time began to tell them of His sufferings and His Resurrection: "He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the ancients and scribes and chief priests, and be put to death, and the third day rise again." Peter said to Him: "Lord, be it far from Thee; this shall not be unto Thee." Jesus turned to him and said: "Go behind Me, Satan; thou savourest not the things that are of God, but that are of men."

He then addressed Himself to the multitude and to His disciples, saying: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself,

and take up his cross and follow Me. For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul? He that shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also will be ashamed of him when He shall come in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." Then he added: "Amen I say to you, that there are some of them that stand here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God coming in power" (Matt. xvi.; Mark viii.; Luke ix.).

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Six days after the above discourse our Saviour took Peter, James, and John, and went with them up into a high mountain—probably Mount Thabor—to pray; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone as the sun, and His garments became white as snow. And behold there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with Him.

Overcome with joy and not knowing what he said, Peter exclaimed: "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." While he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them; and lo, a voice came out of the cloud, saying: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

At the sound of these words the Apostles fell prostrate on the ground, and a great fear came over them, until our Saviour touched them, and bade them rise and be not afraid. When they rose up, they found that the cloud had vanished and that Jesus was standing there alone. He charged them to tell the vision to no man till the Son of man should be risen from the dead.

As they came down from the mountain together, they asked Him what it was that the Scribes and the Pharisees meant when they said that Elias must come down first. He explained to them that Elias was to precede His second coming, and that it was John the Baptist who had appeared in the spirit of Elias to announce to men His first coming. Then from the recollection of the sufferings of the Baptist He went on to remind them of what He Himself must suffer: "Elias is already come, and they knew him not, but have done to him whatsoever they had a mind. So also the Son of man shall suffer from them."

They were nearing the foot of the mountain where there was a great multitude gathered round the other disciples, and the Scribes disputing with them; but no sooner did they see our Saviour approaching than they came forward to salute Him. He asked them why they disputed thus among themselves.

Before they could find words to answer Him, a man's voice was heard from the midst of the crowd, exclaiming: "Master, I have brought my son having a dumb spirit to Thee, who, wheresoever

he taketh him, dasheth him, and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away; and I spoke to Thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not."

"O unbelieving and perverse generation," said our Saviour, "how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring thy son hither to Me." No sooner, however, were they come into our Lord's presence than the evil spirit threw the boy down on the ground, where he rolled about, foaming at the mouth.

Our Lord asked the father how long his son had been thus tormented. The poor man said to Him: "From his infancy; and ofttimes hath he cast him into the fire and into waters to destroy him; but if Thou canst do anything, help us, having compassion on us."

Jesus said to him: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." "I believe, Lord; help my unbelief," he said, his eyes bathed in tears.

Then our Saviour threatened the unclean spirit and said: "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee, go out of him; and enter no more into him." Crying out and greatly tearing him, the devil went out of the boy, leaving him as one lifeless. The people were filled with awe, and said one to another: "The child is dead." But our Saviour, taking him by the hand, raised him up and restored him whole and sound to his delighted father.

The Apostles asked our Lord in secret how it was that they had been unable to cast out the evil spirit. He told them that their failure was due to their want of faith, and added: "This kind of spirit is not cast out except by faith supported by prayer and fasting" (Matt. xvii.; Mark ix.; Luke ix.).

CHAPTER XXXIX

CHRIST PAYS THE TRIBUTE—HIS INSTRUCTION ON HUMILITY, SCANDAL, AND FORBEARANCE

When our Saviour with His disciples had returned to Capharnaum, those who collected the tribute for the upkeep of the Temple came to Peter, and asked: "Doth not your Master pay the didrachma?"* "Yea," answered Peter. But when they were come into the house, Jesus said to him: "What is thy opinion, Simon? The kings of the earth, of whom do they receive tribute or custom? of their own children or of strangers?" "Of strangers," Peter answered. "Then," said our Saviour, "the children are free." But, to avoid giving scandal, He directed Peter to pay the tribute. "Go," He said, "to the sea and cast in a hook; and that fish which shall first come up, take; and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a stater: take that, and give it to them for Me and thee."

While they were on their way from the Mount of Transfiguration to Capharnaum, the disciples had disputed among themselves

* The didrachma = a shekel = 1s. 4d.

which of them should be the greatest in His kingdom. Now when He asked them what had been the subject of their conversation, they were confused and held their peace. But knowing the thoughts of their hearts, and wishing to teach them that the kingdom of heaven is the reward, not of ambition, but of simplicity and humility, He set a little child in the midst of them as a pattern for their imitation, and said: "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven; and he that shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me; and whosoever shall receive Me receiveth Him that sent Me: for he that is the lesser among you, he is the greater. . . . And whosoever shall give you to drink a cup of water in My name, amen I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

"And whosoever shall scandalise one of these little ones, it were far better for him if a millstone were hung about his neck and he were cast into the sea. Woe to the world because of scandals. It must needs be that scandals come; but, nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh. And if thy hand or thy foot scandalise thee, cut if off and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to go into life maimed or lame, than having two hands and two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thy eye scandalise thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. It is better for thee having one eye to enter life, than having two eyes to be cast into the fire of hell, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished. . . . See that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father who is in heaven."

Then to show how precious in the sight of God is a single soul, He continued: "If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them shall go astray, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the mountains and go to seek that which is gone astray? And if it so be that he find it, amen I say to you, he rejoiceth more for that than for the ninety-nine that went not astray. Even so it is the will of your Father who is in heaven that not one of these little ones should perish.

"But if thy brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother. If he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more; and if he will not hear them, tell the church. If he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican. Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven.

"Again I say to you, that if two of you shall consent upon earth concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by My Father. For where there are two or three gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

Then Peter said to Him: "Lord, how often shall my brother offend me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" Jesus answered: "I say not to thee, till seven times; but till seventy times seven

times. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened to a king who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed ten thousand talents. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. But that servant, falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with pity, let him go and forgave him all the debt.

"But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him a hundred pence; and laying hold of him, he throttled him saying: Pay what thou owest. And his fellow-servant, falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison till he paid the debt.

"Now his fellow-servants, seeing what was done, were very much grieved, and came and told their lord all that was done. Then the lord called him and said: Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt because thou besoughtest me. Shouldst not thou have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt. So shall My Heavenly Father do to you if you forgive not every one his brother from his heart" (Matt. xvii., xviii.; Mark ix.; Luke ix.).

CHAPTER XL

JESUS AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES—THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY.

When the Feast of Tabernacles was come, our Saviour stayed behind for a few days, and then went up to Jerusalem, but, as it were, in private, after part of the festival was over. To show how keenly His presence was expected, men were constantly asking: "Where is He?"

Without being recognised, He entered Jerusalem, and, in the midst of the Feast, suddenly appeared teaching in the Temple. The Jews, astounded at His wisdom and the power of His teaching, asked: "How doth this man know letters, having never learned?" "My doctrine," He said, "is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do the will of Him, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, he is true, and there is no injustice in him."

Many of the people, seeing the miracles that He performed, believed in Him. "For when Christ cometh," they said, "shall He do more miracles than these which this man doth?" But the chief priests and the Pharisees were more enraged than ever to see the progress He was making, and wished to have Him seized and brought before them; yet no man ventured to lay hands upon Him.

On the last and most solemn day of the feast, our Saviour stood in the Temple, and with a loud voice cried out that if any man thirsted and would come to Him to drink, He would give him living water—that is, the gifts of the Holy Ghost which were promised to the faithful. Hereupon a discussion arose among the people. Some said that He was indeed the expected Prophet; some that He was the Christ; while others asked: "Doth the Christ come out of Galilee? Doth not Scripture say that He cometh of the seed of David, and out of Bethlehem, the town where David was?"

When our Saviour appeared in the Temple the following morning the people flocked to Him to hear His teaching. It was then that the Scribes and the Pharisees, who had long sought to entrap Him in His words, prepared such a snare for Him that it appeared impossible for Him to escape their cunning wiles. They brought to Him a woman whom they had taken in adultery, and set her in their midst. "Master," they said, "this woman was even now taken in adultery. Moses in the Law commanded us to stone such a one. But what sayest Thou?" But He, bowing Himself down, wrote with His finger on the ground.

When therefore they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." And again stooping down, He wrote on the ground. But they hearing this went out one by one, beginning at the eldest; and Jesus alone remained and the woman whom they had accused. Again rising up, He said to her: "Where are they that accused thee? Hath no man condemned thee?" "No man, Lord," she answered. Jesus said to her: "Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more" (John vii., viii.).

CHAPTER XLI

CHRIST JUSTIFIES HIS DOCTRINE

After silencing His persecutors, our Saviour continued His instructions to the people. "I am the light of the world," He said; "he that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life. . . . I go away, and you shall seek Me; but if you believe not in Me, you shall die in your sin."

The Jews said to Him: "Who art Thou?" Jesus answered them: "The beginning, who also speak unto you. He that sent Me is true, and the things I have heard of Him, these same I speak in the world." But they understood not that He called God His father. He therefore said to them: "When you shall have lifted up the Son of man (*i.e.*, when they shall have put Him to death on the Cross), then shall you know that I am the Messias, and that I do nothing of Myself but as the Father hath taught Me." On account of these words many believed in Him.

He said to them: "If you continue in My word, you shall be My disciples indeed; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." They said to Him: "We are the children of

Abraham, and we have never been slaves to any man; how sayest Thou: You shall be free?" Jesus answered them: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. . . . I speak that which I have seen with My Father; and you do the things which you have seen with your father."

They said to Him: "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them: "If you be the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a man that hath spoken the truth to you, which I have heard of God. This Abraham did not. You do the works of your father. . . . If God were your father, you would indeed love Me; for from God I proceeded and came. He it is who sent Me. Why do you not know My speech? You are of your father the devil; and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning; and he stood not in the truth, because truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father thereof. But if I say the truth, you believe Me not. Which of you shall convince Me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe Me? He that is of God heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God."

They answered Him: "Do we not say well that Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?" Jesus said to them: "I have not a devil; but I honour My Father, and you have dishonoured Me. Amen I say to you: If any man keep My word, he shall not see death for ever."

The Jews therefore said to Him: "Now we know that Thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead and the prophets; and Thou sayest: If any man keep My word, he shall not taste death for ever. Art Thou greater than our father Abraham who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom dost Thou make Thyself?"

Jesus answered: "Abraham, your father, rejoiced that he might see My day; he saw it, and was glad." They said to Him: "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?" He said to them: "Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made I AM." They took up stones therefore to cast at Him. But Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the Temple (John viii.).

CHAPTER XLII

CHRIST GIVES SIGHT TO A MAN BORN BLIND

WHEN our Saviour was passing along one of the streets in Jerusalem, He saw a man who had been blind from his birth begging. His disciples asked him: "Master, who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" Jesus answered: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him that sent Me whilst it is day; the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

When He had said these words, He spat upon the ground, and of

the dust and spittle made clay, with which He anointed the man's eyes. He then bade him go and wash in the pool of Siloë. The man did as he was bidden and returned seeing.

They who had previously seen him blind were amazed, and asked: "Is not this he that sat and begged?" Some said that he was indeed the same, others that he only resembled him. But when they questioned the man himself, he replied: "I am he;" and he recounted to them the manner in which his sight had been restored to him.

The astonished neighbours brought the man to the Pharisees. Now it was the Sabbath day when the miracle was performed, and the Pharisees seized upon this fact to stir up envy towards our Saviour. They questioned the man, but he answered in the same simple manner as before: "That man that is called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes, and said to me: Go to the pool of Siloë and wash. And I went, I washed, and I see."

Some of the Pharisees said: "This man is not of God, who keepeth not the Sabbath." But others said: "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" And there was a division among them. They therefore said to him who had been blind: "What sayest thou of Him that hath opened thy eyes?" But he answered: "He is a prophet."

They then refused to believe that he had been born blind and questioned his parents, saying: "Is this your son who you say was born blind? How then doth he now see?"

The parents answered: "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now seeth we know not; or who hath opened his eyes we know not: he is of age, let him speak for himself." This they said because they feared the Jews, who had threatened to cast out of the synagogue whoever should acknowledge Jesus to be the Christ.

The Pharisees recalled the man and said to him: "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." "If He be a sinner," said the man, "I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

They asked him again to tell them in what way he had recovered his sight. But he answered: "Have I not told you already? Why would you hear me again? Would you also become His disciples?"

They reviled him, and said: "Be thou His disciple; but we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses; but as to this man, we know not whence He is." He answered them: "Why, herein is a wonderful thing, that you know not whence He is, and He hath opened my eyes. From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this man were of God, He could not do anything." Exasperated at the boldness and directness of his answers, they exclaimed: "Dost thou teach us?" and they expelled him from the synagogue.

Our Saviour heard that they had cast him out, and when He met

him, He said to him: "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" "Who is He, Lord," he answered, "that I may believe in Him?" Jesus said to him: "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee." The man said: "I believe, Lord;" and falling down he adored Him (John ix.).

CHAPTER XLIII

JESUS IS THE DOOR AND THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Our Saviour next went on to relate the parable in which He represents His Church as a fold, and His followers as sheep who enter the sheepfold, but by the door, Jesus Christ Himself; whereas those who would enter not by the door, but would climb up another way, were thieves and robbers: "He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he hath let out his own sheep, he goeth before them; and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. But a stranger they follow not, but fly from him because they know not the voice of strangers."

Seeing that they understood not the proverb, He continued: "I am the door. By Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved; and he shall go in and go out, and shall find pastures. The thief cometh not but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they may have life, and have it abundantly." Those, then, who would teach without being sent, who have not their mission from God, are thieves and robbers, and the sheep hear them not.

"I am the Good Shepherd," He proceeded. "The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and flieth; and the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd; and I know Mine and Mine know Me. As the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for My sheep. And other sheep I have that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."

He then spoke of the great voluntary sacrifice which He, made man for the redemption of the world, was about to accomplish: "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it up again. No man taketh it from Me; but I lay it down of Myself, and I have power to lay it down; and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of My Father" (John x.).

Soon after this our Saviour left Jerusalem and returned for a little while into Galilee.

CHAPTER XLIV

MISSION OF THE SEVENTY-TWO DISCIPLES

Our Lord's stay in Galilee was but of short duration. He took His final departure from that province to go up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication by way of Samaria, sending messengers before Him to prepare what was necessary. When He and His disciples came to a certain city, the inhabitants refused to let them enter because they were Jews; whereupon James and John, the sons of Zebedee, would have had Him call down fire from heaven to destroy the city in punishment of the insult. But he rebuked their too great zeal, saying: " You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save." And they went into another town.

Then He selected seventy-two of His disciples, whom He sent, two and two, through all the towns and villages through which He intended to pass. He gave them power not only to preach and to teach, but to cure diseases and to cast out devils, and told them that He was sending them as lambs among wolves. The instructions He gave them were similar to those given when He sent out the Twelve. " He that heareth you," He said, " heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me."

At the close of their mission they returned full of joy, saying: " Lord, the devils also are subject to us in Thy name." Jesus said to them: " I saw Satan as lightning falling from heaven. Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. But rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven " (Luke x.).

CHAPTER XLV

PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN—THE ONE THING NECESSARY

Shortly after the return of the seventy-two, a certain Doctor of the Law, who wished to try our Saviour with hard questions, came to Him and asked: " Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?" Jesus said to him: " What is written in the law? How readest thou?" The man answered: " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself." " Thou hast answered right," said our Saviour; " this do, and thou shalt live."

" But who is my neighbour?" asked the lawyer, wishing to justify himself.

Jesus answering, said: " A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him,

and having wounded him went away, leaving him half dead. And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way, and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan, being on his journey, came near him, and seeing him, was moved with compassion; and going up to him bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and setting him upon his own beast brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host and said: Take care of him; and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee. Which of these three in thy opinion was neighbour to him that fell among robbers?"

But he said: "He that showed mercy to him." Jesus said to him: "Go, and do thou in like manner."

Continuing His journey, our Saviour entered into a village called Bethany, and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sitting also at the Lord's feet heard His word. But Martha was busy about much serving; and she stood and said: "Lord, hast Thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve? Speak to her therefore that she help me."

Jesus said to her: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and art troubled about many things; but one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her" (Luke x.).

CHAPTER XLVI

INSTRUCTION ON PRAYER—JESUS AT THE HOUSE OF A PHARISEE

On leaving Bethany, our Lord passed beyond the Jordan, where we find Him instructing His disciples not only on the necessity of prayer, but again teaching them the form that their prayer should take.

"When you pray," He said, "say: Father, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation."

"Which of you," He continued, "shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and shall say to him: Friend, lend me three loaves, because a friend of mine is come off his journey to me, and I have not what to set before him. And he from within should answer and say: Trouble me not, the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. Yet if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet, because of his importunity, he will rise and give as many as he needeth. And I say to you: Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Another comparison He proposed to them, saying: "Which of you, if he ask his father for bread, will he give him a stone? or a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he reach him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him?"

It was at this time that our Saviour was invited to dine at the house of a Pharisee, and while they were at table, the Pharisee wondered within himself that He should eat without having first washed His hands. Jesus, knowing his thoughts, said to him: "Now you Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but your inside is full of rapine and iniquity. Ye fools, did not He that made that which is without make also that which is within. But yet that which remaineth, give alms; and behold all things are clean unto you."

Hereupon a certain lawyer, who was also present, complained to our Saviour, because in saying these things He reproached them. "Woe to you lawyers also," He said, "because you load men with burdens which they cannot bear, and you yourselves touch not the packs with one of your fingers. Woe to you who build the monuments of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Woe to you lawyers, for you have taken away the key of knowledge: you yourselves have not entered in, and those that were entering you have hindered"—*i.e.*, owing to your false doctrines and interpretations you neither observe the Law nor permit others to observe it (Luke xi.).

CHAPTER XLVII

COVETOUSNESS AND THE FOLLY OF RICHES—WATCHFULNESS

Our Lord ceased not to warn His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy, and to put them on their guard against cupidity and the fear of the world. "Take heed," He said, "and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life doth not consist in the abundance of things which he possesseth."

In further admonishing His hearers against the folly of riches, He told them the parable of *The Foolish Rich Man*: "The land of a certain rich man brought forth plenty of fruits. And he thought within himself: What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said: This will I do: I will pull down my barns and will build greater; and into them will I gather all things that are grown to me, and my goods. And I will say to my soul: Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy rest; eat, drink, make good cheer. But God said to him: Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God."

He next exhorted them to watchfulness in the service of God, saying: "Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning in your hands,

and you yourselves like to men who wait for their lord when he shall return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching. Amen I say to you that he will gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and passing will minister unto them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so doing, blessed are those servants.

" If the householder did know at what hour the thief would come, he would surely watch, and would not suffer his house to be broken open. Be you then also ready; for at what hour you think not the Son of man will come."

Peter said to Him: " Lord, dost Thou speak this parable to us, or likewise to all?"

Our Saviour gave him to understand that He was indeed speaking to all, but that those whom He had appointed pastors over His flock would have to render a stricter account: " Who (thinkest thou) is the faithful and wise steward whom his lord setteth over his family to give them their measure of wheat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom, when his lord shall come, he shall find so doing. Verily I say to you, he will set him over all that he possesseth. . . . Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required " (Luke xii.).

CHAPTER XLVIII

NECESSITY OF PENANCE—THE BARREN FIG-TREE —CURE OF THE INFIRM WOMAN

About this time our Lord was informed of the massacre by Pilate, in the Temple, of some Galileans, " whose blood he had mingled with the sacrifices." " Think you," He said, " that these Galileans were sinners above all the men of Galilee, because they suffered such things? No, I say to you: but unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower fell in Siloë, and slew them: think you that they also were debtors above all the men that dwelt in Jerusalem? No, I say to you; but except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish."

To convince them the more how necessary penance was, He spoke the parable of *The Barren Fig-tree:* " A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it, and found none. And he said to the dresser of the vineyard: Behold, for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree and I find none. Cut it down therefore; why cumbereth it the ground? But he answering said to him: Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it and dung it; then if it bear not fruit after that thou shalt cut it down."

On another occasion, when our Lord was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath day, he beheld a woman who for eighteen years had been so bent with a painful infirmity that she could not

look up. He called her to Him and laid His hands upon her, saying: "Woman, thou art delivered from thy infirmity." In a moment she was made straight, and glorified God.

When the ruler of the synagogue saw what had been done, he was angry with our Saviour for working this cure on the Sabbath day, and said to the people: "There are six days wherein you ought to work: in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day."

The Lord answering him, said: "Ye hypocrites, doth not every one of you, on the Sabbath day, loose his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead him to water? And ought not this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" At these words all His adversaries were ashamed; but the people rejoiced to see the wonders which He wrought (Luke xiii.).

CHAPTER XLIX

CHRIST GOES THROUGH PERAEA—THE FEAST OF DEDICATION

PASSING through Peraea, our Saviour taught in the towns and villages, and in this way proceeded towards Jerusalem. Being asked on one occasion whether those who were saved were few or many, He replied: "Strive to enter by the narrow gate; for many shall seek to enter and shall not be able. But when the Master of the house shall be gone in, and shall shut the door, you shall begin to stand without, and knock at the door, saying: Lord, open to us. And He answering shall say to you: I know you not whence you are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east and the west, and the north and the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And behold they are last that shall be first, and they are first that shall be last."

It was soon after this that our Saviour, as He contemplated the ingratitude of the Holy City, gave utterance to that pathetic lamentation: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered thy children as the bird doth her brood under her wings, and thou wouldst not? Behold your house shall be left to you desolate. And I say to you, that you shall not see Me till the time come when you shall say: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

When the city was given over to the joyous celebrations which marked the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple, our Lord entered Jerusalem; and as He was walking in the Temple, in Solomon's portico, the Jews pressed about Him, and called on Him to tell them plainly whether He was the Christ. He therefore said to them: "I speak to you, and you believe not: the works that

I do in the name of My Father, they give testimony of Me. But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give them life everlasting, and they shall not perish for ever; and no man shall pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me is greater than all. . . . *I and the Father are one.*"

The Jews then took up stones to cast at Him; but He checked their rage by asking: "For which of the many good works I have shown you from My Father do you stone Me?"

They answered Him: "For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God."

"If I do not the works of My Father," He answered, "believe Me not. But if I do, though you will not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." They sought therefore to take Him; but He escaped out of their hands and went again beyond the Jordan (Luke xiii.; John x.).

CHAPTER L

CHRIST HEALS THE DROPSICAL MAN—PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER

WITH the wicked intent of watching our Saviour's actions, a certain chief of the Pharisees invited Him to dine with him on the Sabbath day. From the very outset the eyes of His enemies were directed towards Him, for it had been noted that in the crowd of onlookers was a man suffering from dropsy.

Jesus asked: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" Seeing that they held their peace, He took the man, and healed him, and sent him away. Then turning to the assembled guests He said: "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath day?" But they could not answer Him.

Then, marking how they chose the first seats at the table, He said: "When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place lest perhaps one more honourable than thou be invited; and he that invited thee and him come and say to thee: Give this man place; and then thou begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art invited, go, sit down in the lowest place, that when he who invited thee cometh, he may say to thee: Friend, go up higher. Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at table with thee. Because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

He also said to him that had invited Him: "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor thy neighbours who are rich, lest perhaps they also invite thee again, and a recompense be made to thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the

blind; and thou shalt be blessed, because they have not wherewith to make thee recompense; for recompense shall be made to thee at the resurrection of the just."

Hearing these words, one of the guests said: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."

But He said to him: "A certain man made a great supper, and invited many; and he sent his servant at the hour of supper to say to them that were invited that they should come, for now all things were ready. And they began all at once to make excuses.

"The first said: I have bought a farm, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee, hold me excused.

"And another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them; I pray thee, hold me excused.

"And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. The servant returning, told these things to his lord.

"Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant: Go quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the feeble, and the lame, and the blind. And the servant said: Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

"Then the lord said to the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. But I say unto you that none of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper."

When our Lord left the Pharisee's table, He was followed by a great throng of people, to whom He said: "If any man come to Me, and hate not [*i.e.*, be not ready to forsake] his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not carry his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Luke xiv.).

CHAPTER LI

PARABLES—THE LOST SHEEP, THE LOST GROAT, THE PRODIGAL SON

The publicans and sinners also drew near to our Lord to hear His word; and the Pharisees murmured, saying: "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."

Then He spoke to them this parable: "What man of you that hath a hundred sheep, if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, doth he not lay it upon his shoulders, rejoicing; and coming home call together his friends and neighbours, saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost? I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance."

"Or what woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until

she find it? And when she hath found it, doth she not call together her neighbours to rejoice with her? So I say to you: There shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance."

A third parable He spoke to them: "A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his substance.

"And the younger son, gathering all together, went abroad into a far country, and there wasted his substance, living riotously. And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine in that country, and he began to be in want. He then hired himself to one of the inhabitants of the land, who sent him into his farm to feed swine; and he would fain have filled himself with the husks that the swine did eat. He then said to himself: How many hired servants in my father's house abound in bread, and I here perish with hunger? I will arise, and will go to my father, and will say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee; I am not worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and went to his father.

"Even when he was a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and running to him, fell on his neck and kissed him. The young man said to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee; I am not worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants: Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his finger, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry, because this my son was dead and is come to life again; he was lost and is found. And they made merry.

"Now the elder son was in the field, and when he drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing; and calling one of the servants, he asked him what these things meant. But when he learnt what had come to pass, he was angry and would not go in. His father therefore coming out began to entreat him. But he said to his father: Behold for so many years do I serve thee, and I have never transgressed thy commandment, and yet thou hast never given me a kid to make merry with my friends; but as soon as this thy son is come, who hath squandered all his substance, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. Son, said the father, thou art always with me, and all I have is thine. But it was fitting that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead and is come to life again; he was lost and is found" (Luke xv.).

CHAPTER LII

PARABLES—THE UNJUST STEWARD, THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

In the following parables our Lord teaches His disciples to accompany their penitential works with deeds of mercy to the poor, and shows how riches may be used to secure our salvation.

"There was a certain man," He said, "who had a steward, and

the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods And he called to him and said: How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship, for now thou canst be steward no longer. And the steward said within himself: What shall I do? To dig I am not able; to beg I am ashamed. I know what I will do, that when I shall be removed from the stewardship they may receive me into their houses.

" Calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first: How much dost thou owe my lord? But he said: a hundred barrels of oil. And he said to him: Take thy bill and sit down quickly and write fifty. Then he said to another: How much dost thou owe? And he said: A hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him: Take thy bill and write eighty. And the lord commended the unjust steward forasmuch as he had done wisely; for the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. And I say unto you: Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings."

From the above parable we see how much more prudent worldlings are in their temporal concerns than those who profess themselves servants of God are in regard to the things of eternity. In recommending us to make to ourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity (*i.e.*, material wealth), our Lord exhorts us to make the poor our friends before God by relieving them with our alms that they may hereafter, by their intercession, bring our souls to heaven, the *everlasting dwellings* spoken of by our Saviour.

To illustrate the duty of succouring a neighbour in want, our Lord went on to relate the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

" There was a certain rich man," He said, " who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and who feasted sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, who lay at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and no one did give him; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died and was buried in hell; and lifting up his eyes when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

" Abraham said to him: Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is fixed a great chaos, so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot, nor from thence come hither.

" Then, father, I beseech thee, he said, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torments. And

Abraham said to him: They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. But he said: No, Father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead they would do penance. He said to him: If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if one rise again from the dead " (Luke xvi.).

CHAPTER LIII

LAZARUS RAISED TO LIFE

WHILE our Saviour was still on the banks of the Jordan, there came messengers to Him from Martha and Mary at Bethany to inform Him that Lazarus, their brother, was sick: " Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick." Jesus said to them: " This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it "; and He still remained two days longer in Peraea before crossing over the Jordan into Judaea.

Even then His disciples would have dissuaded Him from setting out, saying: " Rabbi, the Jews but now sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again?" But He said: " Lazarus our friend sleepeth; but I go that I may wake him out of sleep." They said to Him: " Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well." Then therefore He said to them plainly: " Lazarus is dead; and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there that you may believe. But let us go to him."

Now when they arrived at Bethany, they found that Lazarus had been four days already in the grave; and that many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother. Hearing of His approach, Martha hastened to meet Him and said: " Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died; but now I know that whatever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it to Thee."

Jesus said to her: " Thy brother shall rise again." " I know," said Martha, " that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her: " I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live; and every one that liveth and believeth in Me shall not die for ever. Believest thou this?" She said to Him: " Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, who art come into this world." She then hurried back to inform Mary of His arrival. " The Master is come," she whispered in her ear, " and calleth for thee." Mary rose up at once and hastened to Him.

The Jews followed her, saying: " She goeth to the grave to weep there;" but she, casting herself at the feet of our Saviour, murmured: " Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." But He, groaning in spirit, was much troubled and asked: " Where have they laid him?" He also wept as He followed them to the tomb. " Behold," said the Jews, " how He loved him."

Arrived at the sepulchre, which was in a cave sealed with a great stone, He bade them remove the stone. But Martha reminded

Him that, as her brother had been dead four days, the body must have already begun to corrupt. Jesus said to her: "Did I not say to thee that, if thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of God?"

The stone was accordingly removed, and the body exposed to view. Then Jesus, raising His eyes towards heaven, said: "Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me; and I know that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people who stand about have I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me." He then cried out in a loud voice: "Lazarus, come forth;" and immediately he that had been dead came forth with his hands, feet, and face still wrapped about with the grave-clothes. "Loose him," said Jesus, "and let him go."

The chief priest and the Pharisees finding that, on account of this miracle, many more believed in Him, planned how they might put Him to death; but He, with a few followers, withdrew to Ephrem, near Jericho, and there abode till the time when He had resolved to deliver Himself up into the hands of His enemies (John xi.).

CHAPTER LIV

OUR LORD'S LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM—THE TEN LEPERS—THE UNJUST JUDGE—THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

Our Lord now seems to have gone northward as far as the borders of Samaria and Galilee, and then to have crossed the Jordan, and to have advanced towards Jerusalem along the east bank of the river.

As He was entering a little town on the frontiers of Samaria and Galilee, He was accosted by ten lepers, who stood at a distance crying out: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" He bade them go and show themselves to the priests, and as they went along they were made clean.

One of them, a poor Samaritan, when he saw that he had been cured, went back, and with a loud voice glorified God. Drawing near to our Saviour, he fell down at His feet and humbly returned thanks. "Were not ten made clean," asked our Saviour, "and where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God but this stranger." And He said to him: "Arise, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole."

In speaking of His second coming, our Saviour compared it to the coming of the Deluge in the days of Noe, when men were solely occupied in the affairs of this world. He even compares the suddenness of its coming to the swiftness of lightning: "As the lightning that lighteneth from under heaven shineth unto the parts that are under heaven, so shall the Son of Man be in His day. But first He must suffer many things, and be rejected by this generation."

He would have His disciples pray daily and frequently: "Always pray and faint not." Moreover, to instil into them the necessity and the power of perseverance in prayer, He spoke to them the parable of the unjust Judge:

"There was a judge in a certain city who feared not God nor regarded man. And there was a certain widow in that city, and she came to him, saying: Avenge me of my adversary. And he would not for a long time. But afterwards he said within himself: Although I fear not God nor regard man, yet because this widow is troublesome to me I will avenge her, lest continually coming she weary me. And will not God avenge His elect who cry to Him day and night?"

Against such as trust in themselves as just, and despise others, He directed the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican:

"Two men went up into the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee, standing, prayed thus within himself: O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this publican. I fast twice in a week; I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven, but struck his breast saying: O God, be merciful to me a sinner. I say to you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke xvii., xviii.).

CHAPTER LV

DIVORCE—JESUS BLESSES LITTLE CHILDREN—THE DANGER OF RICHES—PARABLE OF THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD

Again the Pharisees, anxious to ensnare our Saviour in His words, came to Him and asked: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for any cause?" "Because of the hardness of your hearts," He answered, "Moses permitted you to write a bill of divorce, and put her away; but from the beginning it was not so. From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

Moreover, to His disciples apart, He added; "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for adultery, and marry another, committeth adultery against her." Nor does even such a separation sever the marriage bond; for immediately He goes on to add: "He that shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery." He then takes occasion to praise holy virginity, which He represents as a great and good gift of heaven.

While our Saviour was yet speaking, His attention was drawn to certain women who had brought their little ones with them. They besought Him that He would lay His hands upon them. But the disciples rebuked them and would have sent them away. Jesus, however, said to them: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Amen I say to you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of

God as a little child, shall not enter into it." And embracing them, and laying His hands upon them, He blessed them.

When our Saviour was proceeding along the road, a young man ran up to Him, and kneeling before Him, asked: "Good Master, what shall I do to possess everlasting life?" Jesus said to him: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. Thou shalt do no murder; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; honour thy father and thy mother; thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

"These commandments," said the young man, "I have kept from my youth. What is yet wanting to me?" Jesus said to him: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." Hearing these words, the young man went away sad, for he had great possessions.

When our Saviour saw him thus sorrowful, He said to His disciples: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Seeing that His words filled His disciples with wonder, He added: "With men it is impossible, but not with God, for all things are possible with God. . . . And I say to you: There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children for the kingdom of God's sake who shall not receive much more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

He next went on to relate to them the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard: "The kingdom of heaven is like to a householder who went our early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And having agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing in the market-place idle; and he said to them: Go ye also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just. And they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour and did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he said to them: Why stand you here all the day idle? They say to him: Because no man hath hired us. He saith to them: Go ye also into my vineyard.

"When evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: Call the labourers and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first; and they received every man a penny. But the first thought that they should receive more, and they murmured, saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us that have borne the burden of the day and the heat. But he said to one of them: Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine and go thy way; I will also give to this last even as to thee. Or is it not lawful for me to do what I will? Is thy eye evil because I am good? So shall the last be first, and the first last; for many are called but few are chosen" (Matt. xix., xx.; Mark x.; Luke xviii.).

CHAPTER LVI

A BLIND MAN HEALED NEAR JERICHO—VISIT TO ZACHEUS

As the Feast of the Pasch was drawing near, our Saviour, preaching and teaching in the villages on the way, advanced in the direction of Jericho. When His intention of going to Jerusalem was made known to the Twelve, they were filled with alarm; but taking them apart, He said to them: "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and to the Scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they shall mock Him, and spit upon Him, and scourge Him, and kill Him; and the third day He shall rise again."

At this moment the mother of the sons of Zebedee approached Him with the request: "Say that these two may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left in Thy kingdom." But He said to her: "You know not what you ask. Can you drink of the chalice that I shall drink?" On their answering that they could. He said to them: "You shall indeed drink of the chalice that I shall drink; but to sit on My right hand or left is not Mine to give you, but to them for whom it is prepared by My Father." Then to all He said: "Whosoever will be the greater let him be your servant. Even as the Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life for the redemption of many."

As He drew near to Jericho, followed by a great multitude, there sat by the roadside a blind beggar, who, on being told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, cried aloud: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." But the multitude ordered him to hold his peace. He, however, called out the louder: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." Touched with compassion, our Saviour had the blind man brought to Him, and said: "What wilt thou that I do to thee?" "Lord, that I see," he answered. Jesus said to him: "Receive thy sight; thy faith hath made thee whole." Immediately he saw; and all the people joined with him in praising and glorifying God.

In Jericho was a rich man named Zacheus, the chief of the publicans, and he had a great desire to see our Saviour. Being of short stature, he was not ashamed, in spite of the dignity of his office, to climb into a sycamore-tree that overlooked the way along which our Saviour must pass. When our Saviour drew near to the place and saw him he bade him come down, "For to-day," He said, "I must abide in thy house." Zacheus came down at once and received Him with joy.

The people, seeing this, murmured, saying that Jesus was gone to be the guest of a man that was a sinner. But Zacheus in all humility said: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold." Our Saviour said to him: "This day is salvation come to this house,

because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Matt. xx.; Mark x.; Luke xviii., xix.).

CHAPTER LVII

PARABLE OF THE POUNDS—THE BLIND BARTIMEUS CURED

FINDING that His disciples still believed that a temporal kingdom was soon to be proclaimed, our Saviour, in order to disabuse their minds, related to them, while still in the house, the following parable, in which He compared Himself to a nobleman going into a distant land:

"A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And calling his ten servants, he gave them ten pounds with which to trade till he returned. But the inhabitants of the country hated him, and sent an embassy after him, saying: We will not have this man to reign over us.

"And it came to pass that he returned, having received the kingdom; and he commanded his servants to be called to whom he had given the money that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. The first said: Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. Well done, thou good servant, he said, because thou hast been faithful in a little, thou shalt have power over ten cities. The second, whose pound had gained five pounds, he placed over five cities. Another came, saying: Lord, behold here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin, for I feared thee because thou art an austere man; thou takest up what thou didst not lay down, and thou reapest what thou didst not sow. His lord said to him: Out of thy own mouth I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest all this; why then didst thou not give my money into the bank that at my coming I might have required it with usury?

"Then, turning to those who stood by, he commanded them to take away the pound from him, and to give it to him that had ten; for, said he, to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound; and from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken from him. But as for those my enemies, who would not have me reign over them, bring them hither and kill them before me."

After this, our Saviour, accompanied by a great multitude of people left Jericho by the road leading to Jerusalem. A blind man, Bartimeus by name, was seated by the wayside begging; and when he heard who it was that was passing by, he cried out again and again: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." Moved with pity, our Saviour commanded him to be brought to him; and when this was told to Bartimeus, casting off his garment, he leaped up and came to our Saviour, who, in reward for his faith, restored his sight (Mark x.; Luke xix.).

CHAPTER LVIII

THE ANOINTING IN BETHANY

Six days before the Pasch our Saviour arrived at Bethany, the village in which He had raised Lazarus to life. A supper was made for Him at the house of Simon the Leper, and Lazarus was one of the invited guests.

While Martha was serving at table, Mary brought an alabaster box of precious ointment, which she poured on the head of our Saviour as He sat at table. She then anointed His feet and wiped them with her hair.

Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, who was about to betray Him, asked why the ointment was not sold for three hundred pence, and the money given to the poor. This he said, not because he cared for the poor, but "because he was a thief, and, having the purse, carried what was put therein." Many of the disciples, too, complained of what they looked upon as needless waste.

But our Saviour said to them: "Let her alone; why do you molest her? She hath wrought a good work on Me. For the poor you have always with you; but Me you have not always. She, in pouring this ointment upon My body, hath anointed Me for My burial. Amen, I say to you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memory of her."

When it was reported in Jerusalem that our Saviour had arrived in Bethany, crowds of Jews flocked from the city, not only to see Him, but Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead. The chief priests, however, finding that Lazarus was the cause of many believing in Him, resolved to put both of them to death (Matt. xvi.; Mark xiv.; John xii.).

PART VI

OUR SAVIOUR'S MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM

CHAPTER LIX

PALM SUNDAY

ON the first day of the week our Saviour set out for Jerusalem, and great numbers of those who had come up to the feast came forth to meet Him.

As He drew near to Bethphage, a village on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples into the village which lay before them, where, He told them, they would find an ass tied, and a colt with her: "Loose them," He said, "and bring them to Me. And if any man shall say anything to you, tell him that the Lord hath need of them, and forthwith he will let them go." All this was done that the word might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: "Tell ye the daughter of Sion: Behold thy King cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of her that is used to the yoke" (Zach. ix. 9).

All happened as had been foretold; and the disciples, spreading their garments on the back of the colt, our Saviour sat thereon, and in this way advanced up the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. Many of the people spread their garments in the road, while others cut down branches of palm-trees and strewed them before Him; and as the procession began the descent of the Mount, and the people came in sight of Jerusalem, there burst from the lips of those who went before and those who came after a mighty shout of joy. They praised God for the wonderful works they had seen, and cried aloud: "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

Some of the Pharisees, alarmed, asked Him to rebuke His followers. But He said to them: "If these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out." Then fixing His gaze on the Holy City, He wept over it, and said: "If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee: and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation."

When He entered the city, the people cried out: "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee;" but the Pharisees said to one another: "Do you see that we prevail nothing? Behold the whole world is gone after Him." As it was now evening, He went back to Bethany, where He spent the night (Matt. xxi.; Mark xi.; Luke xix.; John xii.).

CHAPTER LX

THE BARREN FIG-TREE—SECOND PURIFICATION OF THE TEMPLE

THE next morning, as our Saviour was returning to the city, He was hungry; and seeing a fig-tree by the wayside, He drew near to see if perchance there might be fruit upon it—not that it was yet the season for figs, but because of the unusual abundance of leaves it displayed at so early a season of the year. Yet not a single fig was to be found thereon. He then pronounced this doom upon the barren fig-tree: "May no fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever."*

When our Saviour was come to the Temple, He cast out those who profaned it as He had done at the beginning of His public ministry. "It is written," He said, "My house shall be called the house of prayer to all nations; but you have made it a den of thieves."

The chief priests and the Scribes sought how they might put Him to death, but they feared to lay hands upon Him because the people were in admiration at His doctrine. Even the children, in imitation of their elders, cried out: "Hosanna to the Son of David." Burning with rage, the Pharisees asked Him: "Hearest Thou what these say?" "Have you not read," He answered, "Out of the mouth of infants and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?" (Ps. viii. 3). When evening was come, He went again to Bethany as on the previous evening (Matt. xxi.; Mark xi.).

CHAPTER LXI

LAST DAY OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY

PARABLES OF THE TWO SONS, OF THE HUSBANDMEN, AND OF THE MARRIAGE-FEAST.

IN the morning, when our Saviour with his disciples arrived at the spot where He had cursed the barren fig-tree, Peter drew His attention to it, saying: "Behold the fig-tree which Thou didst curse is withered away." Jesus said to them: "Amen, I say to you, if you shall have faith and stagger not, not only this of the fig-tree shall you do, but also if you shall say to this mountain: Be thou removed and cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive. And when you pray, forgive, if you have aught against any man, that your Father who is in heaven may forgive you your sins; but if you will not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive you your sins."

* How strikingly typical of the Jewish Synagogue was this fig-tree! Its leaves were the show of exterior service, the barren foliage of their legal rites, void of the fruit of good works. We learn, too, that there is no time nor season when we can be excused from bringing forth good works.

When He was teaching in the Temple, the chief priests and the ancients of the people came to Him, and asked: "By what authority dost Thou do these things." He said to them: "I will also ask you one word; answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men?" Now they thought within themselves, if we say from heaven, He will ask why we did not believe Him; if we say from men, the people will stone us; for they are persuaded that John was a prophet. They therefore answered: "We know not." Then He said to them: "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."

He then began to speak to them in parables: "A certain man had two sons, and coming to the first, he said: Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. The son refused, but afterwards, moved with repentance, he went. And he said to the other in like manner; but he, answering, said: I go, sir; and he went not. Which of the two did the father's will?" They say to him: "The first." Jesus answered: "Amen, I say to you that the publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of justice, and you did not believe him; but the publicans and the harlots believed him. But you, seeing it, did not even afterwards repent, that you might believe him."

Our Saviour then set before them another picture of their guilt and rejection in the parable of the Husbandmen: "A certain householder planted a vineyard, and having made a hedge round about it, and dug in it a winepress, and built a tower, he let it out to husbandmen, and then went into a far country. When the time of the vintage drew nigh, he sent his servants to the husbandmen that they might receive the fruits thereof; but the husbandmen, laying hands on his servants, beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. Last of all he sent his own son, believing that at least they would reverence him. But when they saw the son, they said one to another: This is the heir: come let us kill him, and we shall have the inheritance. Then taking him, they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him." "What, therefore," asked our Saviour, "will the lord of the vineyard do to them?" They say to Him: "He will bring these evil men to an evil end, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen that shall render him the fruit in due season."

In the parable of the Marriage-feast or of the Wedding-garment, our Saviour again warned the Jews that the day of their rejection was at hand, when their inheritance should be transferred to the Gentiles.

"The kingdom of heaven," He said, "is like to a king who made a marriage-feast for his son. And he sent his servants to call those that were invited, but they would not come. Again he sent other servants to tell them that his beeves and fatlings were killed, and that all things were ready. But they slighted his invitation and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise, while the rest laid hands upon his servants, and, after treating them

contumeliously, put them to death. The king was angry, and sending his armies, destroyed those murderers and burnt their city.

"Then he said to his servants: The marriage indeed is ready, but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways and as many as you shall find call to the marriage. This they did, and brought back with them all that they found, both good and bad; and the marriage was filled with guests. The king, going in to see them, found one who had not on a wedding-garment, and said to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding-garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to his servants: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; for many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. xxi.; Mark xi., xii.; Luke xx.).

CHAPTER LXII

LAST DAY OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY (Continued)

TRIBUTE TO BE PAID TO CAESAR—CHRIST CONFUTES THE PHARISEES AND THE SADDUCEES.

THINKING to bring about our Saviour's ruin by entrapping Him in His speech, the Pharisees and the Herodians came to Him and said: "Master, we know that Thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man; for Thou dost not regard the person of men. Tell us therefore what dost thou think: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?" But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said: "Why do you tempt Me, ye hypocrites? Show Me the coin of the tribute." And they offered Him a penny. He said to them: "Whose image and inscription is this?" They say to Him: "Caesar's." Then He said to them: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Marvelling at His wisdom, but disappointed, they retired.

The Sadducees, who teach that there is no resurrection, were the next to try what they could effect. They said to Him: "Master, Moses wrote unto us that if any man's brother die and leave his wife behind him and have no children, his brother should marry his widow. Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife and died, and as he left no children, his brother married his widow. The second, the third and all the other brothers took her in like manner, and left no children. Last of all the woman also died. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife shall she be?"

Jesus said to them: "You do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God; for in the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but shall be as the angels of God in heaven. And concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spoke to him, saying: I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (Exod. iii. 6). But God is not the God of the

dead but of the living; for all live in Him. You therefore do greatly err." The people who had listened were in admiration at His teaching.

The Pharisees, seeing their rivals the Sadducees worsted in their attempt to bring ridicule on our Saviour, assembled together in their numbers; and one of them, a doctor of the Law, tempted Him, saying: "Master, which is the great commandment of the Law?" Jesus said to him: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. This is the first and greatest commandment; and the second is like to it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments depend the Law and the Prophets."

"Master," he exclaimed, "Thou hast said in truth that there is but one God, and that He should be thus loved; and to love one's neighbour as oneself is greater than all holocausts and sacrifices." Jesus said to him: "Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven."

Our Saviour in His turn put a question to the Pharisees: "What think you of Christ? Whose son is He?" They say to Him: "David's." "How, then," He asked, "doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying: The Lord said to my Lord: Sit on My right hand until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his Son?" This question, which clearly implies the Divinity of the promised Messias and the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, they could not answer. The Pharisees, thus refuted, turned away, and no man after that durst ask Him any questions (Matt. xxii.; Mark xii.; Luke xx.).

CHAPTER LXIII

LAST DAY OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY (Continued)

Christ Condemns the Scribes and the Pharisees—the Widow's Mite.

Our Saviour, addressing His disciples and the people, said to them: "Beware of the Scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, and love salutations in the market-place, and the first chairs in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; who, feigning long prayer, devour the houses of widows. These shall receive the greater condemnation.

"The Scribes and the Pharisees have sat on the chair of Moses. All things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you, do; but according to their works do ye not; for they say and do not. They bind heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders; but with a finger of their own they will not move them. And all their works they do to be seen of men." On both alike He pronounced woes for keeping the kingdom of heaven shut against men.

Then addressing Himself to all the Jews who surrounded Him, He said: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets,

and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not? Behold your house shall be left to you desolate. For I say to you, you shall not see Me henceforth till you say: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

As He sat over against the treasury, He watched the people casting into it their gifts. Many that were rich cast in much, but there came up a poor widow who dropped in two mites, which together make a farthing; whereupon He called His disciples and said: "Amen I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than all they that have cast into the treasury; for they have given of their abundance, but she of her want."

Philip and Andrew introduced some Gentiles to our Saviour, who would appear to have expected their coming, for He at once addressed them, and, after explaining to them for what end He was come into the world, He exclaimed: "Father, glorify Thy name."

Straightway a voice from heaven was heard: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." Some of those who were present compared the voice to thunder, while others said it was an angel that spoke. Jesus said to them: "This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself." This He said signifying His death on the cross. Then, with words of promise to those who believed in Him, but of warning to such as despised the graces offered them, He withdrew (Matt. xxiii.; Mark xii.; Luke xxi.).

CHAPTER LXIV

LAST DAY OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY (Continued)

CHRIST FORETELLS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE—HIS SECOND COMING.

As our Saviour was leaving the Temple, His disciples called His attention to its glory and magnificence. He said to them: "Do you see all these things? Amen, I say to you, there shall not be left a stone upon a stone that shall not be thrown down."

That same evening, as He sat on the Mount of Olives, His disciples asked Him privately when His predictions would come to pass and what would be the sign of His second coming. "Take heed," He said, "lest any man deceive you; for many shall come in My name, saying: I am He; and they shall deceive many. And when you shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, fear ye not; for such things must needs be; but the end is not yet. These things are the beginning of sorrows.

"But before all these things they will lay hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and into prisons, dragging you before kings and governors for My name's sake.

Brother shall betray his brother unto death, and the father his son; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and shall work their death. And you shall be hated by all men for My name's sake; but a hair of your head shall not perish. And many false prophets shall arise and shall seduce many; but he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved. And the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all nations, and then shall the consummation come.

" And when you shall see Jerusalem compassed about with an army, know that the destruction thereof is at hand. And when you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, standing in the Holy Place, then let them that are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let him that is on the house-top not go down into the house; and let him that shall be in the field not turn back to take up his coat. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things may be fulfilled that are written. Then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world till now, neither shall be. Unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles till the times of the nations be fulfilled.

" And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be moved, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven. Then the tribes of the earth shall mourn; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. And He shall send His angels with a trumpet and a great voice; and they shall gather His elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them. And when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand.

" And from the fig-tree learn a parable: When the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see all these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand. Amen, I say to you, that this generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.

" But of that day and hour no one knoweth, no, not the angels of heaven; but the Father alone. Take heed, watch and pray; for you know not when the time is. As a snare it shall come upon the earth as in the days of Noe. What I say to you I say to all: Watch " (Matt. xxiv.; Mark xiii.; Luke xxi.).

CHAPTER LXV

LAST DAY OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY (Continued)

Parables of the Ten Virgins and of the Talents.

His exhortation to watchfulness our Saviour still further urged in the parables of the Ten Virgins and of the Talents.

"The kingdom of heaven," He said, "shall be like to ten virgins who, taking their lamps, went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride. And five of them were foolish and five wise. But the five foolish, having taken their lamps, did not take oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with the lamps. And the bridegroom tarrying, they all slumbered and slept; and at midnight a cry was made: Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye forth to meet him.

"Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps; but the foolish, whose lamps were gone out, said to the wise: Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. The wise answered: Lest there be not enough for us and for you, go you rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. Now whilst they were away, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. At last came the other virgins also, saying: Lord, lord, open to us. But he answered: Amen, I say to you, I know you not. Watch ye therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour."

In the parable of the Talents our Lord compares Himself to a man who is about to make a long journey, and who entrusts his money to his servants to trade therewith till he shall return. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another only one. The first two doubled their talents; and each, on his master's return was greeted with the words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

But he that had received only one talent came and said: "Lord, I know that thou art a hard man, and being afraid, I went and hid thy talent in the earth: behold, here thou hast what is thine." His lord said to him: "Wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sow not, and gather where I have not strewed; thou oughtest, therefore, to have committed my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received it with usury." He then gave orders for the talent to be taken from him and to be given to him that had ten, and condemned the unprofitable servant to be cast out into the exterior darkness (Matt. xxv.).

CHAPTER LXVI

LAST DAY OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY (Concluded)

The Last Judgment.

Our Saviour ended His discourse by unfolding to His disciples the terrors of the great judgment day. "When the Son of man," He said, "shall come in His majesty, and all His angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His majes y; and all the nations shall be gathered together before Him, and He shall separate them one from another as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left.

"Then shall the King say to those on His right: Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess ye the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; naked, and you covered Me; sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to me. . . . For amen, I say to you: As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.

"Then shall He say to those on His left: Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me not to drink,; I was a stranger, and you took Me not in; naked, and you covered Me not; sick and in prison, and you did not visit Me. . . . For as long as you did it not to one of these least ones, neither did you do it to Me. And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting."

In the meantime the chief priests and the ancients of the people were met together to consult how they might seize our Saviour and put Him to death, when Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, came to them and asked what they would give him and he would deliver Jesus unto them. He accepted their offer of thirty pieces of silver, and from that moment sought an opportunity of betraying our Divine Lord to them.

All during the following day (Wednesday) our Lord did not appear either in the Temple or in Jerusalem, but remained at Bethany till the afternoon of Thursday (Matt. xxv., xxvi.; Mark xiv.; Luke xxii.).

CHAPTER LXVII

THE LAST SUPPER

When the first day of the Azymes or Unleavened Bread came, on which it was necessary that the Paschal Lamb should be slain, our Saviour bade Peter and John go and make ready the Pasch. "Behold," He said, "as you go into the city, there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water; follow him nto the house where he

entereth in, and say to him: The Master saith to thee: Where is the guest-chamber where I may eat the Pasch with My disciples? And he shall show you a large dining-room furnished; there prepare." They went and found as He had said to them, and made ready the Pasch.

At the appointed hour in the evening Jesus sat down, and the Twelve with Him, to eat the Pasch. "With desire," He said, "I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer; for I say to you that from this time I will not eat it till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

Knowing that His hour was come when He should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And whilst they were eating, He said to them: "Amen, I say to you that one of you is about to betray Me." At once they became exceedingly troubled, and each began anxiously to inquire: "Is it I, Lord?" Jesus answered: "He that dippeth his hand with Me into the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of man indeed goeth as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed. It were better for that man if he had not been born." Then Judas said: "Is it I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered him: "Thou hast said it."

John, the beloved disciple was reclining with his head resting on the bosom of our Saviour, and at a sign from Peter asked: "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered: "He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped." And when He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas.

After Judas had eaten the morsel, Satan immediately entered into his heart. Jesus said to him: "What thou doest, do quickly." Judas then rose up and went out quickly, yet the rest did not fully understand the extent of his treachery, but thought that, as he kept the purse, he had been sent to make some purchases for the feast, or to give something to the poor.

After they had eaten the Paschal Lamb, our Saviour rose from the table and laid aside His garments; then girding Himself with a towel, he poured water into a basin and began to wash and wipe the feet of His disciples.

When it came to Peter's turn, he felt ashamed of his unworthiness and said: "Lord, Thou shalt never wash my feet." Jesus said to him: "If I wash them not, thou shalt have no part with Me." Peter answered: "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Jesus said to him: "He that is washed needeth not but to wash his feet, but is wholly clean. And ye are clean, but not all;" for He knew who he was that would betray Him.

Resuming His garments again, He sat down and said: "If I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. Amen, I say to you: The servant is not greater than his lord; neither is the apostle greater than He that sent him."

Then, that the truth or reality might succeed to the figure in one

and the same banquet, our Saviour, after partaking with His disciples of the Paschal Lamb, next proceeded to the institution of the Blessed Eucharist. While they were yet at table He took bread, and blessed and broke, and gave to His disciples, saying: "Take ye and eat: this is My Body." In like manner, taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: "Drink ye all of this. For this is My Blood of the New Testament which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins." He then added: "Do this for a commemoration of Me" (Matt. xxvi.; Mark xiv.; Luke xxii.; John xiii.).

CHAPTER LXVIII

CHRIST FORETELLS PETER'S DENIAL—HIS DISCOURSE AFTER THE LAST SUPPER

Our Saviour, addressing His disciples, said: "My children, yet a little while I am with you. You shall seek Me, and as I said to the Jews, whither I go, you cannot come. A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another."

Peter said to Him: "Lord, whither goest Thou?" Jesus answered: "Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me hereafter." When Peter asserted that he was even ready to lay down his life for Him, our Saviour said to him: "Amen, I say to thee, in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou wilt deny Me thrice. Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren. All of you shall be scandalised in Me this night; for it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed; but after I shall be risen, I will go before you into Galilee." Peter answered Him: "Although all shall be scandalised in Thee, I will never be scandalised. I am ready to go with Thee into prison and to death." And in like manner said all the disciples.

Our Saviour then spoke words of consolation to them and bade them not to be troubled, but to believe in Him and in His words. "In My Father's house," He said, "there are many mansions, and I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again, and will take you to Myself, that where I am you also may be. And whither I go you know, and the way you know." Thomas said to Him: "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me." To Philip's request that He would show them the Father, He said: "Philip, he that seeth Me seeth the Father also. Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?"

"If you love Me," He continued, "keep My commandments; and I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Paraclete that He may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth, whom

the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not nor knoweth Him. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth do I give unto you. Arise, let us go hence."

They arose; and then it was that He entered upon that beautiful discourse in which He compares Himself to a vine, His disciples to the branches, and His Father to the husbandman: "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit My Father will take away; and every one that beareth fruit He will purge that it may bring forth more fruit. If anyone abide not in Me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire. In this is My Father glorified, that you may bring forth very much fruit and become My disciples.

"As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you. Abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do the things that I command you.

"If the world hate you, know that it hated Me before you. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. The servant is not greater than his lord. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. They will put you out of the synagogues; yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he hath done a service to God. But these things I have told you, that when the hour of them shall come, you may remember that I told you.

"And now I go to Him that sent Me. But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Yet it is expedient for you that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. I have yet many things to say to you; but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will teach you all truth. He shall glorify Me because He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it to you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine; therefore I said that He shall receive of Mine and show it to you. You now indeed have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you. Amen, amen, I say unto you: If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full."

Then lifting up His eyes to heaven, He prayed: "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son that Thy Son may glorify Thee, and that He may give life everlasting to all whom Thou hast given Him. And this is life everlasting; that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. I have glorified Thee upon the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

And now He prayed for special graces for His disciples in the

discharge of their duties: "I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou hast given Me out of the world. Thine they were, and to Me Thou hast given them; and they have kept Thy word. They have known in very deed that I came from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me. I pray for them whom Thou hast given Me, because they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, that they may be one as We also are One. I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil. Sanctify them in truth.

"And not only for them do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me, that they may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us; that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me. Father, I will that where I am they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me from the creation of the world."

When He had finished speaking, and a hymn of thanksgiving had been sung, He passed with His disciples over the brook Cedron, which flows between Jerusalem and Mount Olivet, and entered the garden of Gethsemani (Matt. xxvi.; Mark xiv.; Luke xxii.; John xiii.- xvii.).

PART VII

THE PASSION, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

CHAPTER LXIX

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

WHEN they reached the garden of Gethsemani, our Saviour, after directing the rest of the disciples to sit down, took with Him Peter, James, and John, and bidding them watch, went apart, about a stone's throw, into the dimmest corner of the garden. There He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad. "My soul," He said, "is sorrowful unto death;" and He fell flat on the ground, and prayed that, if it might be, the hour might pass from Him: "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee: if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from Me; but yet, not My will but Thine be done." Then He came to the three apostles, but found them asleep. Addressing Himself to Peter, He said: "What? Could you not watch one hour with Me? Watch ye and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again He withdrew apart and prayed: "Father, if this chalice may not pass from Me, but I must drink it, Thy will be done."

A second time He came to His apostles, and again He found them asleep, for their eyes were heavy; whereupon He went away the third time and prayed, using the selfsame words. And being in an agony He prayed the longer; and His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground. And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him.

Coming back once more to His Apostles, and finding them still sleeping, He said: "It is enough; the hour is come; rise, let us go; behold he is at hand that will betray Me."

While He was yet speaking, behold Judas entered the garden, at the head of a great multitude of men armed with swords and clubs, and bearing lanterns and torches; for they had been sent by the chief priests to seize our Lord, Judas had given them a sign: "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He, hold Him fast." Accordingly, when he saw our Saviour, he went up to Him, and saluting Him with "Hail, Rabbi," he kissed Him. "Friend," asked our Saviour, "whereunto art thou come? Dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?"

In the meantime the mob drew near to lay hands upon our Saviour, but He advanced to meet them, and asked: "Whom seek you?" They answered: "Jesus of Nazareth." He said to them: "I am He." No sooner had He uttered these words than, as though thunderstruck, they fell to the ground. A second time He asked them whom they sought, and receiving the same reply, He said:

"I have told you that I am He. If therefore you seek Me, let these go their way." Then did He allow Himself to be seized.

Seeing the mob lay violent hands on his Master, Peter drew his sword, and struck off the ear of Malchus, one of the servants of the High Priest. Our Saviour said to him: "Put up thy sword into the scabbard. The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it? Thinkest thou that I cannot ask My Father, and He will give Me presently twelve legions of angels? How then shall the Scripture be fulfilled?" Saying this, He touched the ear of Malchus and healed him. He then turned to the chief priests and the elders, who were the leaders of the band, and said: "You are come out as it were to a robber with swords and clubs to apprehend Me. I sat daily with you, teach ng in the Temple, and you laid not hands on Me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

When the disciples saw their Divine Master bound, they were overcome with fear, and took to flight. Peter, however, and another disciple, who is supposed to have been John, followed at a safe distance. "Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be dispersed" (Matt. xxvi.; Mark xiv.; Luke xxii.; John xviii.).

CHAPTER LXX

JESUS BEFORE ANNAS—PETER'S DENIAL

From Gethsemani our Saviour was led bound first to the house of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiphas, who was the High Priest of that year, and who had, on a previous occasion, counselled the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. Here, in order to give the Council time to assemble, He was detained for a time and questioned at some length concerning His disciples and His doctrine.

But He answered: "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in the synagogue and in the Temple; and in secret I have spoken nothing. Ask those who have heard what I have spoken unto them. Behold they know what things I have said." Thereupon one of the officers gave Jesus a blow, and said: "Answerest Thou the High Priest so?" "If I have spoken ill," He replied, "give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou Me?" Annas broke off the examination at once and hurried off Jesus, still bound, to Caiphas.

Arrived at the palace of Caiphas, our Saviour was taken into an outer hall opening into the court. The entrance to the High Priest's palace was by a gate leading into an open quadrangle, in the middle of which a fire had been kindled against the chill of the night; and around the fire were grouped many of the servants and soldiers in attendance on the High Priest.

Not only had Peter and John followed our Lord to the palace of Caiphas, but John, who was known to the High Priest, had ventured to enter, and obtained permission from the portress for Peter to enter also.

While Peter was warming himself at the fire, the maid-servant who had let him in came up and asked: "Art thou not also one of this man's disciples?" "I am not one of His disciples," he answered. "I know not what thou sayest." Alarmed and ashamed, he withdrew to the porch, and the cock crew.

Soon after this another maid-servant recognised Peter and said to those standing by: "This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth." But he exclaimed with an oath: "I know not the man."

About an hour after, some of those who were standing about said to Peter: "Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean; even thy speech doth discover thee;" while a servant, a kinsman of Malchus whose ear Peter had cut off, asked: "Did I not see thee with Him in the garden?" Upon this Peter began to curse and to swear that he knew not the man.

At that moment the cock crew; and at the same time Peter looked in the direction of the hall where Jesus was with His arms still bound. Their eyes met. In an instant Peter remembered the warning of Jesus, "Before the cock crow twice, thou wilt deny me thrice;" and, filled with grief and shame, he went out and wept bitterly (Matt. xxvi.; Mark xiv.; Luke xxii.; John xviii.).

CHAPTER LXXI

JESUS BEFORE CAIPHAS AND THE SANHEDRIM

When Jesus was brought away from Annas to the palace of Caiphas, He was led forthwith into the presence of the Sanhedrim over whose deliberations Caiphas was presiding during the night-session. The hall in which the tribunal was held looked out, as we have seen, upon the court.

The chief priests and the whole council were resolved on having our Saviour condemned as a false prophet and blasphemer; for then, by the Mosaic Law, He would merit death. To this end many false witnesses were called. At length two false witnesses came forward and affirmed: "This man said: "*I am able to destroy* the Temple of God, and after three days to rebuild it." To all this Jesus made no reply. Then the High Priest rose up and said: "Answerest Thou nothing to the things that these witness against Thee?" He, however, continued to hold His peace.

But the High Priest, bent on extorting an answer from Him, exclaimed: "I adjure Thee by the living God that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said to him: "Thou hast said it. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Then the High Priest rent his garments, saying: "He hath blasphemed. What further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy: What think you?" But they answering said: "He is guilty of death." At this point the Sanhedrim broke up, to meet again at early dawn.

In the meantime our Saviour was left to the affronts of the soldiers

and the brutal throng, who insulted Him in the most barbarous fashion. They blindfolded Him; they spat in His face and buffeted Him; while many struck Him in the face with the palms of their hands, calling to Him: "Prophesy unto us, O Christ, who is he that struck Thee?" And they uttered blasphemies against Him.

In the morning at daybreak the Sanhedrim met again and consulted how they might induce the Roman Governor to put him to death. This time they called no witnesses; but when He was brought before them, they said to Him: "If Thou be the Christ, tell us." He answered: "If I tell you, you will not believe Me. . . . But hereafter the Son of man shall be sitting on the right hand of God." Then said they all: "Art Thou the Son of God?" And He said: "You say that I am." They exclaimed: "What need we any further testimony, for we ourselves have heard it from His own mouth?" As it was customary with the Jews to hand over to the Roman Governor those whom they had condemned in their own councils, they led Him to Pilate to have their sentence carried into execution.

Then Judas, who had betrayed Him, seeing that He was condemned, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the ancients, saying: "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. But they said: "What is that to us? Look thou to it." And casting down the pieces of silver in the Temple, he went and hanged himself with a halter.

But the chief priests said: "It is not lawful to put the money into the corbona (*treasury*), because it is the price of blood." After consulting together they bought with it the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. Thus was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet: "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him that was prized, whom they prized of the children of Israel; and they gave them unto the potter's field, as the Lord appointed to me" (Matt. xxvi.; Mark xiv.; Luke xxii.).

CHAPTER LXXII

JESUS BEFORE PONTIUS PILATE

Our Saviour was led to the Praetorium, where Pilate had already taken his seat. Pilate asked the Jews what accusation they brought against their prisoner. They answered: "If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up to thee." Pilate said to them: "Take Him and judge Him according to your law." They answered: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." It was necessary that the words of our Lord should be fulfilled: "They shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him up to the Gentiles to be mocked and to be scourged and to be crucified" (Matt. xx. 18, 19). Asked by Pilate what charge they adduced against Him, they said: "We have found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that He is Christ, the King."

Hereupon Pilate went back into the Praetorium and said to our Saviour: "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus owned that He was, but said to Pilate: "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or have others told it thee of Me?" Pilate answered: "Am I a Jew? Thy own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee up to me: What hast Thou done?" Jesus said to him: "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews." "Art Thou a king, then?" asked Pilate?" Jesus answered: "Thou sayest that I am a king. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth." Pilate said to Him: "What is truth?" but, without waiting for an answer, he went out and told the Jews that he found no cause in Him.

Fearing that Pilate was about to set our Saviour free, they grew more earnest in their accusations, saying: "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judaea, beginning from Galilee to this place." But Pilate, hearing of Galilee, asked if the man was a Galilean; and when he understood that He was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem in those days.

Now Herod was glad, for he had long been desirous of seeing our Saviour, because he had heard many things of Him, and hoped to see some sign wrought by Him. But, though he put many questions, our Saviour replied not a word. Disappointed and enraged, and moved, too, by the clamours of the Jews, Herod and his army made a mockery of Him. They in derision had Him clothed in a white garment, and sent Him back to Pilate. And on that day Herod and Pilate were made friends, for before they were enemies to each other

Pilate saw that it was through envy that the Jews had brought their accusations against our Saviour, and tried how he might set Him free. "You have presented unto me this man as one that perverteth the people, and behold I, having examined H m, find no cause in those things wherein you accuse Him. No, nor does Herod; for I sent you to him, and behold nothing worthy of death is done to Him" (Matt. xxvii.; Mark xv.; Luke xxiii.).

CHAPTER LXXIII

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

At last Pilate thought he had found a way of delivering our Saviour. At the time of the Passover it was a custom for the Governor to release to the people any prisoner whom they chose. To induce them to ask for our Saviour, he put Him in comparison with Barabbas, a notorious murderer, and proposed to release to them which of the two they might choose.

While he awaited their decision, there came a message from his wife bidding him have nothing to do with "that just man," for in her dreams she had been much troubled concerning Him. Whilst

he was listening to his wife's messenger, the chief priests and the elders had gone among the people urging them to demand the release of Barabbas. When therefore Pilate asked which of the two he should release unto them, they exclaimed: "Not this man, but Barabbas." Pilate asked: "What then shall I do with Jesus, who is called Christ?" As with one voice they exclaimed: "Let Him be crucified." Pilate said to them: "Why, what evil hath this man done? I find no cause in Him. I will chastise Him, therefore, and let Him go." But they only cried out the more: "Let Him be crucified."

Seeing that he prevailed nothing, Pilate took water and washed his hands before the people, saying: "I am innocent of the blood of this just man: look you to it." They exclaimed: "His blood be upon us and upon our children." He then set Barabbas free, and handed our Saviour over to the brutal soldiers.

The whole band of soldiers having been called together, they stripped our Saviour, then fastened Him by the wrists to a low pillar and cruelly scourged Him. Afterwards they platted a crown of sharp thorns and pressed it violently upon His head. To complete the outward appearance of a mock king they clothed Him in a purple garment, put a reed in His hand for a sceptre, and bowing the knee before Him, they mocked Him, saying: "Hail, King of the Jews." And spitting upon Him, they took the reed and struck His head.

Pilate, seeing the abject state to which our Saviour had been reduced, and thinking that the sight of Him might move the people to pity, presented Him thus to them, saying "Behold the man." Yet they cried out the more violently: "Crucify Him, crucify Him." Pilate said to them: "Take Him you and crucify Him; for I find no cause in Him." They answered Him: "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."

Still afraid to yield, Pilate took our Saviour back again into the hall, and said to Him: "Whence art Thou?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate said to Him: "Speakest Thou not to me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and I have power to release Thee?" Jesus answered: "Thou shouldst not have any power against Me unless it were given thee from above. Therefore he that delivered Me to thee hath the greater sin."

When the Jews perceived that Pilate was still desirous of setting Him at liberty, they cried out: "If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend; for whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar." Mounting the judgment-seat in the place that is called Lithostrotos, and in Hebrew Gabbatha, Pilate said to the Jews: "Behold your king." But they cried out: "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him." Pilate asked: "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered: "We have no king but Caesar." At this Pilate yielded. He released Barabbas; and Jesus, whom he had so often declared innocent, he delivered unto them to be crucified (Matt. xxvii.; Mark xv.; Luke xxiii.; John xix.).

CHAPTER LXXIV
THE CRUCIFIXION

Now began that painful journey from the city to the place of execution. After the soldiers had torn the purple cloak from our Saviour's shoulders, and clothed Him once more in His own garment, they led Him, with the cross on His shoulders, through the streets of the city, and out by the gate which led to the hill of Calvary or Golgotha. Two malefactors were also led out with Him to be put to death. As they left the city, the soldiers, seeing that He was almost unable to move along, and was sinking beneath the heavy weight of His burden, forced a man of Cyrene, named Simon, to carry the cross after Him.

A great crowd followed, and among them many women weeping and lamenting; but our Saviour turned to the women and said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but for yourselves and for your children; for behold the days shall come wherein they will say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the breasts that have not given suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us; and to the hills: Cover us. For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall they do in the dry?"

When they were come to the place of execution, our Saviour was offered a draught of wine mingled with gall; but after He had tasted, He would not drink. He was then stripped of His clothes, stretched on the cross, and nailed by His hands and feet to the hard wood. It was now the sixth hour; and with Him they crucified two thieves, the one on His right hand, and the other on His left. Thus was the Scripture fulfilled: "He was reputed with the wicked" (Isa. liii. 12). And He prayed: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

On the cross, immediately above His head, Pilate had caused to be put in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin, this inscription: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." The chief priests said to Pilate: "Write not, The King of the Jews; but that He said: I am the King of the Jews." Pilate answered: "What I have written I have written."

The cross was watched by a guard of four soldiers under the command of a centurion, and they divided the clothes of our Saviour among them. After four parts had been made, there yet remained the seamless cloak, for which they cast lots, that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "They divided My garments among them, and upon My vesture they cast lots" (Ps. xxi. 19).

As our Saviour hung upon the cross, He was exposed to the scoffs of a mocking crowd. They that passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads, and saying: "Vah! Thou that destroyest the Temple of God and in three days dost build it up again, save Thy own Self. If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross."

In like manner the chief priests with the Scribes, mocking, said: "He saved others, Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God: let Him now deliver Him if He will have Him; for He said: I am the Son of God." Even one of the two thieves that were crucified with Him blasphemed Him, saying: "If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us." But the other rebuked his fellow-criminal, saying: "Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation. And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done no evil." Then, turning to our Saviour, he said: "Lord, remember Me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom." Jesus said to him: "Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise."

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore had seen His mother and the disciple standing whom He loved, He said to His mother: "Woman, behold thy Son;" and to the disciple: "Behold thy mother." And from that hour the disciple took her to his own.

And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice: "Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabacthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Some of those who stood by said: "Behold He calleth Elias."

Knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, Jesus said: "I thirst." Immediately one of the soldiers, taking a sponge and filling it with vinegar, put it on a reed and raised it to His lips; and the others said: "Let us see whether Elias will come to deliver Him."

When Jesus had taken the vinegar, He said: "It is consummated." And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the Temple was rent in the midst. And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." And saying this, and bowing His head, He gave up the ghost (Matt. xxvii.; Mark xv.; Luke xxiii.; John xix.).

CHAPTER LXXV

THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS

At the time of our Saviour's death the veil of the Temple, as we have seen, which hung between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, was rent in two from the top to the bottom: the earth quaked, the rocks were split asunder, the graves were opened, and numbers of saints arose and were seen by many in Jerusalem after His Resurrection.

Seeing the wonders that were being wrought around him, the centurion was filled with awe, and confessed aloud: "Indeed this man was the Son of God." Even the multitude that had come together to see what was done returned striking their breasts. And many of

the holy women who had followed our Saviour from Galilee, and many who had accompanied Him from Jerusalem, stood apart gazing in silence on Him whom they had loved so dearly.

As it was the eve of the Sabbath, and the Jews did not wish the bodies to remain on the cross on the Sabbath day, they begged Pilate to allow them to be taken down and buried. He readily granted their request, and sent soldiers for this purpose.

Seeing that the two thieves were still alive, they ended their sufferings by breaking their legs. When, however, they came to our Saviour and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs, but one of them with a spear opened His side, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it hath given testimony, and his testimony is true. These things were done that the Scriptures might be fulfilled: "You shall not break a bone of Him" (Exod. xii. 46); and again: "They shall look on Him whom they pierced" (Zach. xii. 10).

Meanwhile, Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, and in private a disciple of our Lord, came to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate expressed wonder that He was already dead, but having satisfied himself of the truth, he granted Joseph's request. Nicodemus also, a ruler of the Jews, came to help to bury our Saviour, bringing with him a mixture of myrrh and aloes with which to embalm the body. They took down the body from the cross, and wrapping it in a fine linen cloth, together with the spices, laid it in the new monument which Joseph had hewn for himself out of the rock in a garden near the place of crucifixion. They then rolled a large stone against the entrance and went away. The women, however, who had accompanied our Saviour from Galilee, observed where they laid the body, as it was their intention to come after the Sabbath was over for the purpose of again embalming it.

The next day, on the morning of the great Paschal Sabbath, the chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate and said: "Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day, lest perhaps His disciples come and steal Him away and say to the people: He is risen from the dead; and the last error shall be worse than the first." Pilate said to them: "You have a guard; go, guard it as you know." And they departing made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting guards (Matt. xxvii.; Mark xv.; Luke xxiii.; John xix.).

CHAPTER LXXVI

THE RESURRECTION

EARLY in the morning of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other pious women set out for the sepulchre in order to complete the embalmment of the body of our Lord.

As they went along, they asked one another who would roll back the stone, for it was very great. But when they reached the tomb,

they were surprised to find the stone removed. "Behold there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow; and for fear of him the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men."

While her companions remained at the tomb, Mary Magdalene hurried back to the city to carry the news to Peter and John: "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him." But the other women entered the tomb, and were struck with astonishment to see, sitting on the right side, an angel in the appearance of a young man clad in a white robe, who said to them: "Fear not; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; He is risen; behold the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee: there you shall see Him as He told you."

In the meantime Peter and John had set out for the tomb, followed by Mary Magdalene. As they drew near to the sepulchre, the two Apostles began to run, but John arrived at the tomb first. Stooping down, he looked in and saw the linen clothes lying, but hesitated to enter. When Peter came up, he went into the sepulchre, and saw not only the linen clothes, but the napkin that had been wrapped about the head of our Lord lying folded apart. John then went in, saw this also, and believed; "for as yet they knew not the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead." The two then returned home.

But Magdalene remained behind, and stood weeping in front of the sepulchre. Stooping down, she looked into the sepulchre, and saw two angels in white, sitting where had rested the head and feet of our Saviour. "Woman," they said, "why weepest thou?" She answered them: "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." She then turned round, and saw standing before her a man whom she knew not, but whom she took to be the gardener. He said to her: "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" "Sir," she answered, "if Thou hast taken Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus, for He it was, said to her: "Mary." She, turning, said to Him: "Master." He said to her: "Do not touch Me, for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren, and tell them that I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God."

When the other women were returning from the sepulchre to carry the tidings to the disciples, they were met by our Saviour Himself, who bade them: "All hail." They knew His voice, and fell down and worshipped Him. He said to them: "Fear not. Go, tell My brethren that they go into Galilee; there they shall see Me."

After the guards had recovered from their fright, some of them went into the city and related to the chief priests all that they had

seen. These, taking counsel with the ancients, gave a great sum of money to the soldiers, saying: "Say you: His disciples came by night, and stole Him away when we were asleep. And if the governor shall hear of this, we will persuade him and secure you." And they, taking the money, did as they were taught (Matt. xxviii.; Mark xvi.; Luke xxiv.; John xx.).

CHAPTER LXXVII

JESUS APPEARS TO PETER AND TO TWO DISCIPLES GOING TO EMMAUS

The third appearance of our Saviour on Easter Day, as we gather from St. Luke, was to St. Peter: "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon;" and again from St. Paul: "He was seen by Cephas, and after that by the eleven" (1 Cor. xv. 5).

In the afternoon of the same day two of the disciples were going to Emmaus, a town situated sixty furlongs from Jerusalem; and as they went along, they spoke of what had taken place in Jerusalem during the last few days. Whilst thus engaged, our Lord Himself, whom they regarded as a traveller, came up and joined them. He asked them what was the subject of their discourse and why they were so sad. One of them, Cleophas, said to Him: "Art Thou alone a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days." "What things?" He asked. They answered: "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people; and how our chief priests and princes delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we hoped that it was He who should have redeemed Israel; and now besides all this, to-day is the third day since all these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company affrighted us, who, before it was light, were at the sepulchre, and not finding His body, came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that He is alive. And some of our people went to the sepulchre and found it as the women had said, but Him they found not."

Then He said to them: "O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?" And He explained to them the passages from Scripture that Moses and the prophets had written concerning Him.

When they reached Emmaus He seemed about to proceed further, but they urged Him to stay with them as the day was far spent. He yielded to their wishes, and whilst He was at table with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to them. By this action their eyes were immediately opened; but no sooner had they recognised who He was than He vanished from their sight.

Filled with astonishment, they said to each other: "Was not our heart burning within us whilst He spoke in the way and opened

to us the Scriptures?" They hurried back to Jerusalem, where they found the eleven with some of the disciples gathered together, and told them what had occurred on the way. They, in turn, were welcomed with the news: "The Lord indeed hath risen, and hath appeared to Simon" (Luke xxiv.).

CHAPTER LXXVIII

JESUS APPEARS TO THE ASSEMBLED APOSTLES

That same day, when it was late, and the Apostles were met together with closed doors for fear of the Jews, our Saviour suddenly appeared in their midst, and said to them: "Peace be to you." Believing it was a spirit they saw, they were troubled and afraid, till He said to them: "Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your heart? See My hands and feet: handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me to have." When He had said this, He showed them His hands, His feet, and His side: and partook of a piece of broiled fish and a honeycomb.

Again He said to them: "Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you." Then He breathed upon them and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained." Already at the Last Supper He had given them power to change bread and wine into His own Body and Blood; and now, by conferring upon them this additional power of binding and loosing, He completed their priestly character.

One of their number, Thomas, surnamed Didymus, was not with them at this time; and when he was told by the others that they had seen the Lord, he said: "Except I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." For another week longer the Apostles waited at Jerusalem—that is, till after the Feast.

Eight days after the Resurrection the Apostles were again assembled together, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were shut as before, when, of a sudden, our Saviour appeared in the midst of them and said: "Peace be to you." Then He said to Thomas: "Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing." Thomas said to Him: "My Lord and my God." Jesus answered him: "Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they who have not seen, and have believed."

When the Feast of the Passover was ended, and the strangers who had come from distant lands to celebrate it had dispersed, the disciples of our Lord returned to Galilee, there to await the fulfilment of the promise: "Behold He will go before you into Galilee; there you shall see Him" (Matt. xxviii.; Luke xxiv.; John xx.).

CHAPTER LXXIX

FURTHER MANIFESTATIONS OF OUR LORD

On one occasion seven of the Apostles—Peter, Thomas, Nathanael (Bartholomew), James, and John, and two others—had spent the night fishing in the Sea of Galilee, but had taken nothing. In the morning, while they were still dragging their nets a short distance from the shore, they saw our Saviour standing on the margin of the sea, but did not recognise Him. He called to them to cast their net on the right side of the ship. They obeyed; and so great was the number of fishes they netted that they could not haul them in. By this John recognised who the stranger was, and said to Peter: "It is the Lord." At once Peter girded his garments about him, plunged into the sea, and swam ashore. The others brought the ship to land, slowly dragging with them the heavily-laden net, which, when drawn ashore, was found to contain a hundred and fifty-three large fishes. As soon as they came to land, they saw a fire prepared with a fish on its hot embers, besides a quantity of bread. Jesus invited them to come and eat; yet no one asked Him who He was, for they were convinced that it was indeed the Lord.

When the meal was over, our Saviour turned to Peter and asked: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?" Peter answered: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Jesus said to him: "Feed my lambs."

A second time He asked: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me?" Again Peter answered: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Jesus said to him: "Feed My lambs."

For the third time our Saviour repeated the question: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me?" Then was Peter troubled because He had asked him a third time, "Lovest thou Me?" and he said to Him: "Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee." Jesus said to him: "Feed My sheep;" and He at the same time foretold to him that he would have the glory of dying, like his Divine Master, the death of the cross.

After this the Apostles went to the mountain in Galilee, where our Saviour had appointed them to go. "Then He was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once" (1 Cor. xv. 6); and seeing Him, they adored. He said to them: "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned."

After that St. Paul tells us (1 Cor. xv. 7) He was seen by James, then by all the Apostles, to whom He showed Himself alive after His passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them and speaking of the kingdom of God (Matt. xxviii.; Mark xvi.; John xxi.).

CHAPTER LXXX

THE ASCENSION

On the fortieth day after Christ's Resurrection we find His Apostles assembled at Jerusalem, where He appeared to them for the last time before His Ascension,* and commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but there to wait for the fulfilment of the promise of the Father, the baptism with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence. And he added: "These are the words that I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me." And He instilled into them a new light by opening their minds to understand the Scriptures.

He then led them forth over the Mount of Olives towards Bethany. There, with hands uplifted, He gave them His parting blessing; and as He blessed them, He raised Himself up before their eyes from earth towards heaven; and as He ascended a cloud intervening took Him out of their sight. "You shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before" (John vi. 63).

They stood gazing upwards after Him till, behold, two angels in white garments stood by them and said: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven." They fell down and adored; then, filled with joy, they returned to Jerusalem, praising and blessing God, and there awaited the coming of the Holy Ghost.

"Many other signs also," says St. John, "did Jesus in the sight of His disciples which are not written in this Book. But these things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (Mark xvi.; Luke xxiv.; John xxi.).

* Of the ten different manifestations of our Saviour mentioned by the sacred writers, five are assigned to the day of His Resurrection:

1. To Mary Magdalene, in the garden near the sepulchre.
2. To the devout women returning from the sepulchre.
3. To Peter (Luke xxiv. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5).
4. To the two disciples on the way to Emmaus.
5. To the assembled Apostles, except Thomas.

Between the Resurrection and the Ascension, five separate manifestations are also recorded:

1. After eight days, to the Eleven, Thomas being present.
2. To the seven Apostles by the Sea of Galilee.
3. On a mountain in Galilee to the great body of the disciples.
4. To James the Less (1 Cor. xv. 7).
5. On Ascension Day, in Jerusalem and on Mount Olivet.

PART VIII

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Besides his Gospel, St. Luke also wrote the "Acts of the Apostles." This Book gives us a short view of the first establishment of the Christian Church, a short account of the preaching and actions of St. Peter, and a more particular account of St. Paul's apostolical labours down to the year A.D. 63.

CHAPTER LXXXI

ELECTION OF MATTHIAS—THE DAY OF PENTECOST

AFTER their return to Jerusalem from Mount Olivet the Apostles retired to an upper room, where they persevered steadfastly in prayer, in company with Mary, the mother of our Saviour, the women who had ministered to Him, and other disciples, numbering in all about a hundred and twenty souls.

Here Peter, in virtue of his supremacy, standing in their midst invited them to fill the place which had become vacant by the fall of Judas. "The Scripture," he said, "must be fulfilled which the Holy Ghost foretold by the mouth of David, concerning Judas: And his bishopric let another take (Ps. cviii. 8). Wherefore of these men who have been with us from the baptism of John until the day wherein Jesus was taken up from us, one must be made a witness with us of His Resurrection."

Two were at first selected, Joseph or Barsabas, surnamed the Just, and Matthias; but the final choice was decided by lot after recourse had been had to prayer for the Divine guidance. The lot fell upon Matthias, who was now numbered with the other Apostles.

Ten days after our Lord's Ascension was the great Feast of Pentecost or Fiftieth, the fiftieth day after the Pasch or Easter. This feast brought to Jerusalem Jews and proselytes (converts to the Jewish faith) from nations the most remote.

The festival found the disciples and the holy women assembled together in the upper room as usual, when suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty wind, which filled the whole house in which they were sitting. And there appeared to them cloven tongues, as it were of fire, resting upon each of them. Immediately all were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak in different tongues according as the Holy Ghost inspired them to speak.

With the coming of the Holy Spirit a most wonderful change was in a moment wrought in the Apostles. No longer timid and shrinking from danger, they fearlessly went forth to preach the Crucified One.

When word of what had come to pass was noised through the city, men flocked together to satisfy themselves about the reality

of what they had been told. Amazed at what they saw and heard, they exclaimed: "Behold, are not all these Galileans? and how have we every one heard our own tongue wherein we were born? We have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God. What meaneth this?" Some in derision said: "These men are full of new wine."

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and said: "Ye men of Judaea, and all you that dwell in Jerusalem, give ear to my words: These men are not drunk, seeing that it is but the third hour (9 a.m.); but this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel: It shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh, upon My servants indeed, and upon My handmaids, and they shall prophesy. Hear, men of Israel: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles and signs which God did by Him in the midst of you, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain."

He then went on to declare to them that God had delivered Him from the darkness of the tomb and had raised Him to life again, in fulfilment of David's prophecy: "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, nor suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. xv. 10). These words, he showed them, could not refer to David in person, since he was dead, and his body had remained in the grave without rising from the dead; but "this Jesus God hath raised up again, whereof we are all witnesses;" that it was He who, having been exalted to the right hand of God, had poured forth upon them the Holy Spirit whose Divine works they both saw and heard. "Let all the house of Israel know," he said, "that God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, to be both Lord and Christ."

At these words they were touched with remorse, and cried out to the Apostles: "What shall we do, men and brethren?" "Do penance," answered Peter, "and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, whomsoever the Lord our God shall call."

With many other words also did he exhort them; and those who believed in the truth which he preached were baptised. In that one day as many as three thousand souls were added to the Church (Acts i., ii.).

CHAPTER LXXXII

CURE OF THE LAME MAN

On a certain occasion when Peter and John went up to the Temple at the ninth hour (3 p.m.) to perform their devotions, a poor man, forty years of age, who had been lame from his birth, had been carried to the Temple and placed at the gate called the Beautiful, that he might beg from those who assembled for prayer. Seeing Peter and John about to enter the Temple, he entreated them for

an alms. Peter said to him: "Look upon us." The man fixed his eyes earnestly upon the Apostles in the expectation of receiving something from them. "Silver and gold I have none," said Peter, "but what I have I give thee: in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise and walk." He then took him by the right hand and raised him up. When the man found that he had gained the use of his feet, he leaped for joy, and with the Apostles entered the Temple, praising and thanking God.

The people were struck with wonder, and in great numbers followed Peter and John, to whom the poor man clung out of joy and gratitude, to Solomon's porch.

Peter, turning to them, said: "Ye men of Israel, why wonder you at this? or why look you upon us, as if by our own strength and power we had made this man to walk? The God of our fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus, whom you indeed delivered up and denied before the face of Pilate when he judged that He should be released. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you. And the Author of life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. And in the faith of His name, this man, whom you have seen and known, hath his name strengthened; and the faith which is by Him hath given this perfect soundness in the sight of you all. And now, brethren, I know that you did it through ignorance, as also your rulers. Be penitent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. . . . To you first God, raising up His Son, hath sent H m to bless you, that every one may convert himself from his wickedness."

Peter's discourse was suddenly terminated by the priests, who came up with the officers of the Temple and the Sadducees, and took the Apostles into custody. The Sadducees in particular, who denied the resurrection of the dead, were filled with anger at their declaring it in the name of Jesus Christ. In consequence of the sermon, however, and of the miracle which preceded it, five thousand new converts were added to the Church.

The following morning the two Apostles were brought before the Sanhedrim, which had assembled under Annas, and were asked by what power and in whose name they had healed the lame man.

Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said to them: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by Him this man standeth here whole. This Jesus is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, which is become the head of the corner; neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved."

The constancy of Peter and John surprised the council. Knowing that they were simple, unlettered men, they wondered at their knowledge of the Scriptures; nor could they contradict the fact of the miracle, seeing that the man who had been healed was present

and stood upright in their midst. They therefore commanded the Apostles to withdraw till they had deliberated among themselves what ought to be done.

Having consulted together, they saw that they could do nothing but threaten, and so, calling the Apostles before them once again, they charged them to speak no more of Jesus. Peter and John replied: "Judge you, if it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." They were dismissed with a warning, and at once returned to their friends, to whom they related all that had befallen them.

They were received with joy, and all united in prayer and thanksgiving to God, beseeching Him to continue to confirm their preaching by signs and wonders done in the name of Jesus, the only Son of God. Their prayer was answered by a sign from heaven. The place in which they were assembled was shaken, and all were filled with the Holy Ghost, and they preached the word of God with confidence (Acts iii., iv.).

CHAPTER LXXXIII

THE EARLY CONVERTS—SIN OF ANANIAS AND SAPHIRA

THE early converts, we are told, adhered to the teaching of the Apostles, and were united in faith and charity: "They persevered in the doctrine of the Apostles, in the communication of the Breaking of Bread, and in prayers." They passed from house to house, thus making use of one another's private homes for the Breaking of Bread, that they might conceal the Sacred Mysteries from the gaze of the profane. With joy and simplicity of heart they took the food which was set before them, and frequently went to the Temple to pray together. They had but one heart and one soul, neither did any one of them say that aught of the things he possessed was his own; but all was for the common use as every one had need. Those who were owners of lands or of houses sold them, and laid the price obtained at the feet of the Apostles.

Now a certain man named Ananias sold a piece of land, but in concert with his wife Saphira kept back a part of the price of it. The rest he brought to the Apostles, pretending that it was the whole sum.

But Peter said: "Ananias, why hath Satan tempted thy heart that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost, and by fraud keep part of the price of the land? Whilst it remained, did it not remain to thee? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied unto man, but unto God." No sooner had Peter uttered these words than Ananias fell down and expired; and there came a great fear upon all. The young men who were present rose up immediately, and carried out the body for burial.

Three hours afterwards Saphira came in, quite unconscious of what had befallen her husband. "Tell me, woman," said Peter to her, "whether you sold the field for so much." "Yes, for

so much," she answered. Peter said to her: "Why have you agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold the feet of those who have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out." That moment she fell down at his feet and died, and the same young men took up her body and buried it beside that of her husband.

Soon the fame of the Apostles spread, not only through Jerusalem, but into the neighbouring cities, and people brought to them their sick, and such as were possessed by unclean spirits, and they healed them. Even the sick that were laid on beds and couches along the street by their friends recovered their health by Peter's shadow falling upon them (Acts ii., v.).

CHAPTER LXXXIV

THE APOSTLES MIRACULOUSLY RELEASED FROM PRISON

When the High Priest and the Sadducees saw their warning to the Apostles thus disregarded, and the converts to the new faith daily multiplying, they were filled with envy. They even laid hands on the Apostles and cast them into the common prison. But an angel opened their prison doors and set them free, and bade them go and preach the Word of Life in the Temple.

The next morning the Sanhedrim assembled, and sent their officers to bring the Apostles before them; but lo! the prison was empty. The officers hurried back with the news: "The prison indeed we found shut with all diligence, and the keepers standing before the doors; but opening it we found no man within." At that moment a messenger presented himself before them and said: "Behold the men whom you put in prison are standing in the Temple and teaching the people."

Fear of a tumult among the people prevented the use of open violence; yet an officer was sent to summon the Apostles before the Sanhedrim, though he was cautioned not to bind them or to use force.

When they appeared, the High Priest said: "We commanded you that you should not teach in His name; and behold you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and you have a mind to bring the blood of this Man upon us."

But Peter and the other Apostles answering said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers hath raised up Jesus, whom you put to death, hanging Him upon a tree. Him God hath exalted with His right hand to be Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins; and we are witnesses of these things, and the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to all those that obey Him (is also witness with us)."

This reply filled the council with anger, and they would have voted the death of the Apostles immediately had it not been for the wise counsel of Gamaliel, one of their members. "Ye men of Israel," he said, "consider with yourselves what you are about to

do with these men. Leave them alone; for if this be the work of men only, it will soon fall to nothing; but if it be from God, you cannot hinder it, and you will only make yourselves guilty by resisting the designs of God."

This wise advice of Gamaliel had its effect. The Apostles were scourged, and then dismissed with the command never to speak in the name of Jesus again. They went from the council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus; nor did they cease to teach and preach daily in the Temple, and from house to house, faith in Jesus Christ (Acts v.).

CHAPTER LXXXV

THE SEVEN DEACONS—MARTYRDOM OF ST. STEPHEN

As the number of converts increased, the greater became the difficulty of distributing the common stock; "and there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, for that their widows were neglected in the daily ministration."

The Apostles called together the multitude of the faithful and said: "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word." Those chosen were Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost, Philip, and five others; and the Apostles prayed over them and laid hands upon them.

A great impetus was given to the spread of the faith by this institution; and even many of the Jewish priests were drawn to profess their belief in the Crucified One.

The most eminent of the seven deacons was Stephen. Full of grace and fortitude, he performed great wonders and miracles among the people; and none were able to resist the wisdom and spirit with which he spoke. His opponents, finding themselves worsted in argument, brought in false witnesses, who accused him before the Sanhedrim of speaking against the Temple and the Law, and of blaspheming against God and against Moses. Stephen stood in the midst of the assembly, and as they fixed their eyes upon him, they saw that his face shone with a wonderful brightness, and appeared to them as the face of an angel.

Questioned by the High Priest, Stephen briefly reviewed the history of God's chosen people from the call of Abraham down to his own time, and concluded with the words: "As your fathers resisted the Holy Ghost, so do you also resist Him. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them who foretold the coming of the Just One; of whom you have been now the betrayers and murderers; who have received the Law by the dispensation of angels, and have not kept it."

Stung to the heart by his words, they gnashed their teeth with rage; but he, looking steadfastly up to heaven, said: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

They stopped their ears so as not to hear his supposed blasphemy, and in their fury rushed upon him, and hurried him out of the city to be stoned to death. They who stoned him laid their garments at the feet of a man named Saul. While the stones were being showered upon him, Stephen fell on his knees, and thus prayed aloud: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;" then, after repeating the words, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," he fell asleep in the Lord. And Saul was consenting to his death (Acts vi., vii.).

CHAPTER LXXXVI

PHILIP CONVERTS THE SAMARITANS AND BAPTISES THE EUNUCH

In the first general persecution, which followed immediately on the martyrdom of St. Stephen, Saul especially distinguished himself by his violence towards the Christians. He ravaged the Church at Jerusalem, entering the houses of the faithful and dragging away to prison both men and women. The Apostles remained at Jerusalem; but those of the faithful who left the city carried with them the light of the Gospel wherever they went.

Thus it was that the people of Samaria were instructed in the faith of Christ by Philip, one of the seven deacons. The people gave an attentive ear to his teaching since they themselves were witnesses of the miracles which he wrought. Unclean spirits obeyed him, the lame and the paralytics were healed, and there was great joy in the city.

In Samaria at this time there was a man named Simon, a noted magician, who had long imposed upon its inhabitants by laying claim to Divine powers. The people said of him: "This man is the power of God, which is called great;" but they were converted by Philip's preaching, and great numbers were baptised. Simon himself believed, or pretended to believe, and being baptised, attached himself to Philip.

The Apostles learning at Jerusalem that the Samaritans had received the word of God, sent to them Peter and John, "who prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost, for they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus."

When Simon saw the wonderful effects which followed the imposition of hands by the Apostles, he offered them money if they would confer its possession upon him. But Peter said to him: "May thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Do penance therefore for this thy wickedness; and pray to God that perhaps this thought of thy heart may be forgiven." Simon said to them: "Pray ye for me to

the Lord that none of these things that you have spoken may come upon me."

The Apostles returned to Jerusalem, and Philip was directed by an angel to go towards the south, to the road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza. Arrived there, he saw the chariot of an Ethiopian eunuch who was the treasurer of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians. This man had become a Jewish proselyte (convert), and was now returning home from worshipping at Jerusalem.

As he approached Philip, he was reading from Isaias the prophet. Acting on the impulse of the Spirit, Philip approached the chariot, and asked him if he understood what he was reading. "How can I," he replied, "unless some one show me;" and he desired Philip to mount the chariot and sit beside him.

The passage he was reading was this: "As a sheep He was led to the slaughter; and like a lamb without a voice before his shearer, so openeth He not His mouth" (Isa. liii. 7). "Is it of himself the prophet speaketh this, or of another?" asked the eunuch.

From the text thus furnished Philip spoke to him of Christ and His doctrine. So impressed was the eunuch by Philip's words that, on drawing near to a pool of water, he exclaimed: "See, here is water. What hindereth me from being baptised?" Philip said to him: "If thou believest with thy whole heart, thou mayest." "I believe," he confessed, "that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." The horses were brought to a standstill, and Philip, going down with the eunuch into the water, baptised him.

No sooner had they come out of the water than the Spirit of the Lord took away Philip from the eyes of the eunuch, who continued on his journey rejoicing. Philip was next seen at Azotus, whence he passed, preaching and teaching in the cities as far as Caesarea (Acts viii.).

CHAPTER LXXXVII

CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

Saul, whose fury against the infant Church knew no bounds, went to the High Priest for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, authorising him to bring back to Jerusalem any men or women whom he might find there professing themselves followers of Christ.

As he drew near to Damascus, our Lord appeared to him in a light of dazzling brightness. At midday Saul was suddenly surrounded by a bright light from heaven; and, falling down, he heard a voice calling to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" "Who art Thou, Lord?" asked Saul. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad," came the reply.

Trembling and astonished, Saul asked: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" The Lord said to him: "Rise up and stand upon thy feet; for to this end have I appeared to thee, that I may make thee a minister and a witness of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things wherein I will appear to thee, delivering thee from the people and from the nations to which now I send thee: to open

their eyes, that they may be converted from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do." Saul rose up at once only to find that, though his eyes were open, he could not see for the brightness of that light. His comrades took him by the hand and led him to Damascus, where he remained blind for three days, neither eating nor drinking.

There was at this time, in Damascus, a certain disciple, by name Ananias, to whom the Lord appeared in a vision and said: "Ananias, arise, and go into the street that is called Strait, and seek in the house of Judas one named Saul of Tarsus; for behold he prayeth. This man is to Me a vessel of election to carry My name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel; for I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake."

Ananias obeyed; and entering into the house where Saul was, he laid his hands upon him and said: "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus hath sent me, He who appeared to thee in the way, that thou mayest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost." Immediately there fell from the eyes of Saul as it were scales, and he received his sight. He then rose up and was baptised.

For some days Saul remained with the disciples at Damascus, where he appeared in the synagogues and preached the faith which he had come to destroy.

He did not remain long at Damascus before he withdrew into Arabia, where he appears to have spent a considerable time before returning to the city.

When he came back to Damascus, the Jews were so violently embittered against him that they conspired to kill him. A guard was set to keep watch over the city gates to prevent his escape; but he was saved by his friends, who let him down by the wall in a basket. From Damascus he repaired to Jerusalem to see Peter; and although he remained in Jerusalem fifteen days, the only other Apostle he saw was James, the cousin of our Lord and Bishop of Jerusalem. At first the disciples in Jerusalem mistrusted him, till he was introduced by Barnabas, who gave an account of the wonderful change that the grace of God had wrought in him.

In Jerusalem Saul boldly preached faith in Christ to the Gentiles, and disputed with the Hellenists, or Greeks, who became so infuriated against him that they formed a plot to kill him. He was saved from their fury by the brethren, who conducted him to Caesarea, whence he sailed to his native city of Tarsus. After this there came to the Church a season of peace and outward calm (Acts ix., xxvi.).

CHAPTER LXXXVIII

PETER AT LYDDA AND JOPPA

In the interval of rest mentioned above, Peter, during a circuit which he made of the different churches, came to Lydda. Here he healed a man named Aeneas, who for eight years had been confined to

his bed with palsy. Going into his house, Peter said to him: "Aeneas, the Lord Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed." And he rose up immediately. This miracle brought about the conversion of many in Lydda, and of those dwelling in the plain of Saron.

At Joppa there dwelt a pious woman named Tabitha, or Dorcas, who was famed for her charity, particularly in clothing the poor. About this time she fell ill and died, her death coming as a severe blow to the brethren at Joppa.

When the faithful learnt that Peter was at Lydda, they sent two of their number to him with the request: "Delay not to come even to us." At once he rose up and went with them.

On his arrival at Tabitha's house he was conducted to the upper chamber, where the body was laid out awaiting burial. Many widows who had been the recipients of Tabitha's charity were there weeping; and they pointed to the garments which she had made for them. Having requested them to leave the room, Peter knelt for a little while in prayer, then turned to the body and said: "Tabitha, arise." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, sat up. He then took her by the hand and presented her alive to her friends. For a time Peter remained at Joppa in the house of a man named Simon (Acts ix.).

CHAPTER LXXXIX

CORNELIUS, THE FIRST GENTILE CONVERT

THERE was in Caesarea at this time a centurion named Cornelius, belonging to the Italian cohort, "a religious man, and one that feared God, with all his house, who gave alms to the people and prayed to God always."

As he was praying in his house about the ninth hour of the day (3 p.m.), an angel suddenly stood before him and called him by name. "What is it, Lord?" he asked, trembling with fear. The angel answered: "Thy prayer and thy alms have ascended for a memorial in the sight of God. And now send men to Joppa to call hither one Simon, who is surnamed Peter. He lodgeth with one Simon, a tanner: he shall tell thee what thou must do."

The next day, about noon, Cornelius's messengers, to whom he had related his vision, were approaching Joppa, when Peter, who had retired to the upper part of the house to pray, was also favoured with a vision. He saw the heavens opened, and, as it were, a great sheet descending, let down by the four corners from heaven to earth; and looking therein, he saw a great number of living creatures, fowls of the air, creeping things of the earth, and four-footed beasts. At the same time he heard a voice bidding him arise, kill, and eat. "Far be it from me, Lord," said Peter, "for I have never eaten any common or unclean thing." The voice replied: "That which God hath purified do not thou call common." This strange scene was repeated three times, and presently the cloth was taken up again into heaven.

While Peter was wondering within himself what could be the meaning of the vision, the Spirit said to him: "Behold, three men seek thee. Arise, therefore, go down, and go with them, doubting nothing, for I have sent them." He went down to them; and after they had told him the reason of their coming, he detained them that day. The next morning, Peter and six of the brethren from Joppa accompanied them to Caesarea.

On learning of Peter's arrival, Cornelius went out to welcome him with marks of the greatest respect, and prostrated himself before him. The Apostle stretched out his hand, saying: "Rise: I myself also am a man." They entered the house together, and there Peter saw many Gentiles who had assembled to welcome him and to hear from him the Divine message. Asked for what cause they had summoned him, Cornelius fully related his vision.

Peter understood from this, and from the vision he himself had seen, that he had to make known the word of God to the Gentiles also, and said: "In truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. But in every nation, he that feareth Him and worketh justice is acceptable to Him." He then went on to preach to them the gospel of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, of whom the prophets had given testimony, and in whose name all who believe receive remission of sins.

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Ghost descended upon Cornelius and his assembled friends, and made His coming known as on the day of Pentecost; for they were instantly endowed with the gift of tongues, and began to glorify God. Peter, turning to the brethren who had accompanied him, asked: "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptised, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and at their request tarried with them some days.

When at length he returned to Jerusalem, he was accused by the Jewish converts of having had intercourse with the uncircumcised Gentiles, but the mere recital of his vision and of what had happened at the house of Cornelius silenced their objections. They praised and glorified God, saying: "God hath thus also given to the Gentiles repentance unto life" (Acts x.).

CHAPTER XC

MANY CONVERTED AT ANTIOCH—PERSECUTION UNDER HEROD AGRIPPA

After the persecution which followed the death of St. Stephen, the Gospel was carried by the exiles from Jerusalem not only through Judaea and Samaria, but even as far as Cyprus and Antioch. Indeed it was at Antioch that the followers of Christ first received the name *Christians*. When tidings of the many conversions made at Antioch reached Jerusalem, the faithful were filled with joy and sent thither Barnabas, "a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith."

On his arrival at Antioch Barnabas rejoiced to see the good work thus happily begun. With the intention of finding an associate who would co-operate with him, he went to Tarsus in quest of Saul, and returned with him to Antioch, where they remained teaching and preaching a whole year.

About this time, certain prophets, chief among whom was Agabus, went down from Jerusalem to Antioch and foretold the approach of a great famine in Judaea. The Christians at once set to work to collect funds, which they sent to Jerusalem by the hands of Saul and Barnabas to provide against the time of distress.

The Church of Judaea was not destined to enjoy a long repose. It was under Herod Agrippa that the second persecution against her broke out. He began by putting to death James, the brother of John; and seeing that this pleased the Jews, he also cast Peter into prison, deferring his execution till after the Feast of the Pasch. The faithful had recourse to prayer, and earnestly besought God for Peter's deliverance.

That same night while Peter, bound with chains, lay sleeping soundly between two soldiers, a bright light suddenly filled the prison. An angel of the Lord stood beside him, and, rousing him from sleep, bade him rise quickly. That instant the chains dropped from his hands. He put on his sandals, and girding his garments about him, followed the angel, who led him past the first and the second ward, and through the iron gate, which opened of itself, into the street. Here the angel immediately disappeared from his sight.

All this time Peter seemed to be in a dream; but when he realised that it was a vision that he had seen, he said to himself: "Now I know indeed that the Lord hath sent His angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod." At once he repaired to the house of Mary, the mother of John, surnamed Mark, where many of the disciples were assembled in prayer.

He knocked at the door; and when a girl named Rhode came to answer the call and recognised his voice, instead of opening to him at once, she ran back full of joy to announce the glad tidings to the assembled disciples. At first they thought her mad; but when she still affirmed that it was indeed Peter, they whispered: "It is his angel."

Meantime Peter continued knocking. At length they opened the door; and when they found that it was he in very truth, they too were amazed and filled with joy. He told them how the Lord had delivered him out of prison, and bade them tell James and the brethren of his miraculous escape. He then retired to another place in order that he might not rashly expose himself to further danger.

In the morning the guards were astonished to find the doors of the prison closely secured, but no prisoner. Herod questioned them, but, disbelieving their story, ordered them to be put to death for neglect of duty.

Some two years after this, while Herod, arrayed in his royal purple, was receiving ambassadors from the Tyrians and the Sidonians, the people, wishing to flatter him, cried out: "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." His heart swelled with pride; but that instant an angel of the Lord struck him. Seized with a loathsome disease, he was eaten up by worms and expired (Acts xi., xii.).

CHAPTER XCI

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

After fulfilling their mission to Jerusalem, Saul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, taking with them John Mark. Now in the Church at Antioch were prophets and doctors; and as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Ghost said to them: "Separate me Saul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have taken them." Then they, fasting and praying and imposing their hands upon them, sent them away.

Thus sent by the Holy Ghost, they went accompanied by John Mark, to Seleucia, the port of Antioch, and thence set sail for Salamis in the east of Cyprus. From Salamis they traversed the island in a westerly direction till they came to the seaport of Paphos.

At Paphos was the residence of the Roman Proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man who, desirous of hearing the word of God, invited Saul and Barnabas to his residence. He would have embraced the faith at once had it not been for a Jewish sorcerer named Bar-jesu or Elymas, who did all in his power to turn the Proconsul from believing.

Then Saul, filled with the Holy Ghost, thus rebuked Elymas: "O thou full of all guile and of all deceit, son of the devil, enemy of justice, thou dost not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord. And now behold the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a time." Immediately Elymas became blind, nor could he any longer find his way without some one to guide him by the hand. Then the Proconsul, seeing what was done, believed, and embraced the doctrine of Jesus Christ. After this we always find Saul spoken of as Paul.

From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed for the coast of Pamphylia and proceeded to Perge. It was here that John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem.

Arrived at length at Antioch in Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas entered the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath day, according to their custom, and sat down. After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue invited them to speak if they had anything to say to the assembled brethren.

Paul rose up and delivered a long discourse, the first of which we have any record. He told them of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, without, however, saying anything that could offend them as Jews. He announced to them that God had sent the long-promised

Saviour and had raised Him from the dead. " Be it known therefore to you, men brethren," he concluded, " that through Him forgiveness of sins is preached to you; and from all the things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. In Him every one that believeth is justified. Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the Prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which you will not believe if any man shall tell it you " (Hab. i. 5).

As Paul and Barnabas rose to leave the synagogue, they were requested by the assembly to speak to them again on the same subject on the following Sabbath.

On that day almost all the people of the city, both Jews and Gentiles, flocked to the synagogue to hear the word of God. The sight of such a vast concourse, however, excited the envy of the Jews, and they raised up a disturbance against Paul's preaching. At last their opposition was such as to cause Paul and Barnabas to declare their determination to preach to the Gentiles the Gospel which they in their blindness rejected: although " to you," they said, " it behoved us first to speak the word of God."

Hearing this, the Gentiles were filled with joy, and glorified the word of the Lord; and the word of God was published throughout the whole country.

This success enraged the Jews beyond measure. They rose up against Paul and Barnabas; and even the Jewish proselytes, among whom were many women of rank and station, vied with the Jews in giving vent to their feelings of hostility. Together they succeeded in driving them out of their territories. But Paul and Barnabas, shaking off the dust from their feet against them, went to Iconium (Acts xiii.).

CHAPTER XCII

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY (*Continued*)

At Iconium, also, the Apostles began their work by preaching in the synagogue, and many, both Jews and Greeks, embraced the faith. At length the whole city was divided into two factions, one of which sided with the Apostles, while the other was wishful to stone them to death. Paul and Barnabas were compelled to seek safety in Lystra.

It was at Lystra that Paul healed a man who had been a cripple from his birth. He noticed him while he was preaching, and called to him with a loud voice: " Stand upright on thy feet." At once the man sprang up and walked. Those who were witnesses of the miracle were struck with awe, and cried out in their native tongue: " The gods, in the likeness of men, are come down to us." They took Barnabas for Jupiter, and Paul for Mercury.

Straightway the priest of Jupiter brought oxen crowned with garlands before the city gate, and, surrounded by a vast number of people, was about to offer them in sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas.

But they, filled with alarm, rent their garments in grief, and ran among the people exclaiming: "O men, why do ye these things? We also are mortals, men like unto you, preaching to you to be converted from these vain things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all things that are in them; who in generations past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He left not Himself without testimony, doing good from heaven, giving rains and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

The zeal of the people to do them honour was soon to be carried to the opposite extreme. Some of their former persecutors, who had come from Antioch and Iconium, stirred up the feelings of the people against them, and roused them to such a pitch of frenzy that they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city for dead. His disciples gathered round his apparently lifeless body, but were rejoiced a little while after to see him show signs of animation.

Paul was soon so far recovered as to be able to enter the city, and the next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe, where they made many converts.

From this point they began to retrace their steps through Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, exhorting their disciples to continue in the faith. In each church they chose certain elders; and when, after enjoining a season of prayer and fasting, they had ordained them priests, they recommended the faithful to God in whom they believed. Having embarked at Attalia, they sailed for Seleucia, and returned to Antioch in Syria, from which city they had set out (Acts xiv.).

CHAPTER XCIII

THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM

PAUL and Barnabas had been in Antioch some considerable time when some Jewish converts from Judaea were found teaching "that, except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved." Paul and Barnabas, who vigorously opposed them in these contentions, were deputed with Titus and others to undertake a journey to Jerusalem to consult the Apostles and the Church of Jerusalem upon the point in dispute. Such confidence had Paul in the correctness of the opinion he defended that he would not suffer Titus, who had been a Gentile, to be circumcised. Arrived there, they were received by the Apostles and the elders.

The question in dispute being stated, it was examined and discussed by the Apostles and elders assembled for the purpose. Peter, rising up, said: "Men, brethren, you know that in former days God made choice among us that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knoweth the hearts, gave testimony, giving the Holy Ghost to them as well as to us, and made no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now, therefore, why tempt you God

to put this yoke on the necks of the disciples? We believe that we shall be saved like them by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

All the assembly then held their peace, and listened to Paul and Barnabas as they recounted what great signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. When they had finished speaking, James, as Bishop of Jerusalem, rose up and said: "Men brethren, hear me: Simon hath related how God first visited the Gentiles to take of them a people to His name; and to this agree the words of the prophets. I judge then that they who from among the Gentiles are converted to God are not to be disquieted, but that we write to them that they refrain themselves from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood."

The discussion was brought to a close, and the controversy finally settled by the decree of the Council pronounced in these words: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things: that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which things keeping yourselves you shall do well."

Letters containing the resolutions of the Council were entrusted to Silas and Judas, surnamed Barsabas, who were chosen to accompany Paul and Barnabas on their return; and when the faithful at Antioch had been gathered together, they delivered the letters to them, and also confirmed their contents by word of mouth. And all experienced great consolation in the decision, receiving it as the resolve not of mortal men, but of the Holy Ghost.

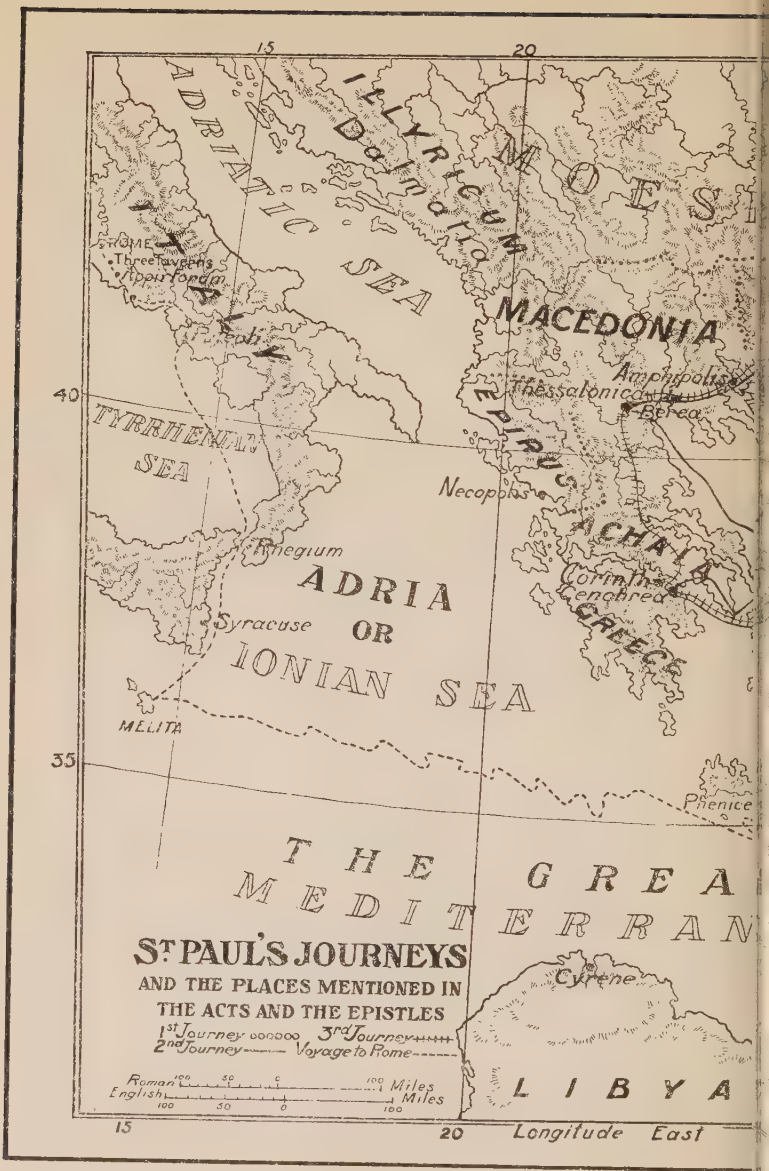
Silas remained some time at Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, and gradually identified himself with Paul's little band of workers (Acts xv.).

CHAPTER XCIV

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

After remaining a short while at Antioch, Paul said to Barnabas: "Let us return and visit our brethren in all the cities wherein we have preached the word of the Lord, to see how they do." Barnabas wished to take with them John Mark; but, as Paul would not consent to the proposal, Barnabas, with John Mark sailed for Cyprus, and Paul, accompanied by Silas, went by land through Syria and Cilicia, visiting the cities in which he had already preached the word of God, confirming the Churches there, and commanding the precepts of the Apostles and the ancients to be observed. From Cilicia they passed into Lycaonia, and visited once more Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium.

It was at Lystra that Paul met Timothy, a convert of high repute, who had probably been converted on Paul's first visit, and whom he associated with himself as disciple and companion during the remainder of this journey.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Thessalonica
Berea
40
TYRRHENIAN SEA
EPIRUS
Nicopolis
ACHAIA
Rhegium
ADRIA
OR
IONIAN SEA
Corinth
Cenchreæ
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35
Phenice
THE MEDITERRAN
GREA
Cyrene
LIBYA
St PAUL'S JOURNEYS
AND THE PLACES MENTIONED IN
THE ACTS AND THE EPISTLES
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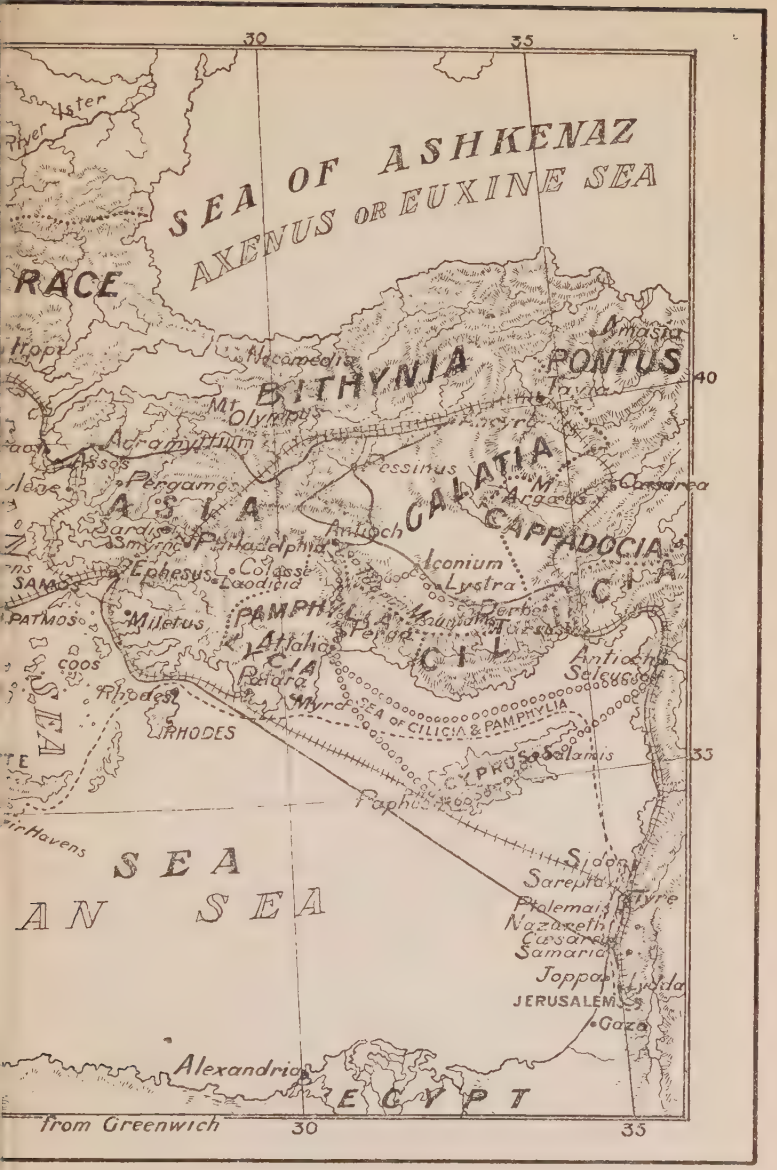

[To face page 321.

With Silas and Timothy, Paul passed through Phrygia and the country of Galatia, but they were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to go and preach at this time in Lesser Asia. They accordingly crossed the eastern border of Mysia and went to Alexandra Troas, situated in the north-west of Asia Minor. Here Paul had a vision. During the night there appeared to him a man of Macedonia beseeching him: "Pass over into Macedonia and help us."

At this point Luke, the author of the Acts, begins to speak in his own name, from which it is inferred that he joined Paul at Troas: "As soon as *we* had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, being assured that God had called *us* to go to preach the gospel to them. Therefore, sailing from Troas, we came with a direct course to Samothracia, and the day following to Neapolis; and from thence to Philippi; and we were in this city some days conferring together."

As there was no synagogue at Philippi, on the Sabbath day Paul and his companions went outside the city gates to the Proseuche or Place of Prayer, situated on the bank of a river, where he knew the Jews assembled for worship. On this occasion only a few women were gathered together for prayer, among whom was a Jewish proselyte named Lydia, a God-fearing woman. To this humble congregation Paul made known the gospel, "to which Lydia listened; and the Lord opened her heart to attend to the things which were spoken by him." After she and her household had been baptised, "she besought us, saying: If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and there remain. And she constrained us."

On a certain day as they were going to the Place of Prayer, they met a slave-girl possessed of a pythonical or divining spirit, who pretended to foretell things to come. She had in this way become a great source of profit to her masters. Following Paul and his companions, she cried out: "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who show you the way to salvation." This she continued to do for many days. Grieved for the unhappy creature, Paul turned to her and said to the spirit: "I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to go out of her." Immediately the spirit obeyed; but when her masters saw that their source of gain was gone, they caused Paul and Silas to be seized and brought before the magistrates, accusing them of having disturbed the city. Moved by the cries of the people, the magistrates had them stripped, beaten with rods, and cast into prison. Their jailer thrust them into the inner prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks.

At midnight, when Paul and Silas were praying and praising God, there was a great earthquake which shook the foundations of the city. The prison doors were suddenly thrown open, and every one's bonds were loosened. Aroused from his sleep and seeing the doors open, the jailer believed that the prisoners had made their escape, and, in despair, drew his sword to kill himself. Paul cried out to him: "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." The

man called for a light, and in fear and trembling, fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas. "Masters," he asked, "what must I do that I may be saved?" "Believe in the Lord Jesus," they answered, "and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." After he had been instructed in what he was to believe and do, he washed the wounds of his two prisoners, and he and his family were baptised.

At daybreak the magistrates sent their sergeants to the prison with word that the Apostles were to be released. Paul said to them: "After having whipped us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, they sent us to prison; and now do they thrust us out privately? Not so; but let them come, and they themselves send us out." Filled with alarm, and trembling now for their own lives on account of their unlawful act, they hastened to ask pardon of Paul and Silas, and besought them as a personal favour to leave the city. On leaving the prison, the Apostles went to Lydia's house to see and comfort the brethren.

Paul and Silas now proceeded on their way through Macedonia, leaving Timothy for a little while, and Luke for a much longer period, to build up the newly founded Church (Acts xv., xvi.).

CHAPTER XCV

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY
(*Continued*)

FROM Philippi Paul and Barnabas next came to Thessalonica (*Salonika*). For three successive Sabbaths Paul went into the synagogue and showed from the Scriptures that the Prophets had marked out that Christ was to suffer and to rise again from the dead; and that Jesus Christ whom he announced to them was in very truth the Messias. His preaching led many Greek proselytes and women of the highest rank, but few Israelites, to embrace the faith.

Paul was not destined to remain long undisturbed. A number of envious Jews of Thessalonica, "taking with them some wicked men of the vulgar sort, and making a tumult, set the city in an uproar." As the position of the Apostles had now become one of great danger the brethren immediately sent them away under cover of night to Beroea.

The inhabitants of Beroea received the word of God with all eagerness. Daily they searched the Scriptures to see if they were in harmony with what Paul declared to them; and great was their comfort to find, even as Paul had said, that Christ was God, and that, after being crucified, He had risen and ascended into heaven. Many believed; but certain Jews of Thessalonica came to Beroea for the sole purpose of exciting the populace against Paul. The brethren, however, conducted him safely to the nearest seaport, whence he sailed for Athens. He left word for Silas and Timothy, who had rejoined him, to follow him with all speed.

While awaiting them at Athens, Paul was moved to see the city

given up to idolatry. He disputed with the Jews in the synagogue, and every day in the market-place with those who would listen to his words. Some of the philosophers with whom he discoursed asked concerning him: "What is it that this babbler would say?" while others, because he preached to them Jesus and the Resurrection, answered: "He seemeth to be a publisher of new gods." They brought him to the Areopagus, the famous tribunal of ancient Athens, and asked: "May we know what this new doctrine is which thou speakest of? for thou bringest certain new things to our ears." Paul answered: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that you are in all things, as it were, too superstitious; for, passing by, and seeing your idols, I found an altar on which was written: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. What, therefore, you worship without knowing it, this I preach to you."

He taught them that it was this one true God who had made the world and all things in it; that from one man He had raised all mankind; that His presence was not confined to temples made by the hands of men, but that He was everywhere, and in all creatures, preserving them every moment; that in Him we live, and move, and subsist; and that this true God who made, preserves, and governs all things in heaven and on earth, could not be made of gold or silver. He reminded them that men, blessed with a being and a knowledge above all other creatures in the world, ought by the light of reason to seek God, and, by considering the effects of His providence over the world and the creatures in it, come to a knowledge of this one God, the author of all; or at least to an imperfect knowledge of Him, as men find out things by groping for them in the dark.

He then went on to show them that this same true God had been pleased to call upon all men to acknowledge and worship Him, to repent of their sins, and to do penance for them; that He had appointed a day for judging every man with equity by the Man Jesus Christ, His own Son, whom He had chosen to be their judge; and by raising His Son from the dead had given sufficient proofs of the truth that every one should rise again from the dead.

When they heard Paul speak of the resurrection of the dead, some of them laughed and made a jest of it, while others promised that they would hear him on this question another time. A few, however, were converted at the time, among them being Dionysius the Areopagite and a certain woman named Damaris (Acts xvii.).

CHAPTER XCVI

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY
(*Concluded*)

DEPARTING from Athens, Paul next visited Corinth, where he met with a certain Jew named Aquila, who, with his wife Priscilla, had lately come there from Italy, owing to a decree of the Emperor Claudius banishing all Jews from Rome. At Corinth Paul remained

with Aquila; and because, like him, he was a tent-maker by trade, they worked together, the Apostle submitting to this labour that he might not be a burden on those to whom he preached the Gospel.

With the arrival of Silas and Timothy at Corinth, Paul's position was altered for the better, seeing that from the Churches of Macedonia they brought with them generous offerings which freed him from pressing temporal cares, and enabled him to give himself up more earnestly to the preaching of the Word.

He won over to the faith some of the Jews and some of the Greeks, but from the Jews in general he met with bitter opposition. They contradicted and blasphemed him, till at last he shook off the dust from his feet, declaring: "Your blood be upon your own heads, I am clean; from henceforth I will go to the Gentiles." Crispus, however, the ruler of the synagogue, was converted, and both he and many of the Corinthians were baptised.

One night our Lord appeared to Paul, and said: "Fear not, but speak, and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee; and no man shall set upon thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city." In obedience to this command, Paul remained at Corinth a year and six months, teaching there and in the neighbouring districts.

The Jews, enraged against Paul, dragged him before Gallio, the Roman Proconsul, on the charge that "this man persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the Law." But Gallio abruptly stopped the proceedings, refusing to be judge of such matters. After staying yet a little while in Corinth, Paul left for Ephesus with Aquila and Priscilla.

At Ephesus he went into the synagogue, and so won the attention of those who heard him that they requested him to stay longer with them. This he could not do at the time; but after promising to come back to them again, he embarked for Caesarea, whence he proceeded to Jerusalem for the Feast, probably the Feast of Pentecost. Soon he left Jerusalem and went down to Antioch in Syria. This terminated his second missionary journey, which had lasted three years (Acts xviii.).

CHAPTER XCVII

PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

After Paul's departure from Ephesus, there arrived there a certain Alexandrian Jew named Apollo or Apollos, who had been a disciple of John the Baptist. He was an eloquent and learned man, well versed in the Scriptures, yet had received only the baptism of John. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and "taught diligently the things that are of Jesus." Aquila and Priscilla heard him in the synagogue, and asking him to come with them, they expounded to him more exactly the teaching of our Lord. As he was desirous to go to Achaia, the brethren at Ephesus recommended him to the Church at Corinth.

Apollos had already gone to Corinth when Paul, on his third

missionary journey, reached Ephesus by way of Cilicia, Galatia, and Phrygia.

On his arrival at Ephesus, Paul found there twelve men who apparently had been disciples of John the Baptist, and who, from his testimony, believed in Christ, but had received no further instruction, nor any baptism but John's. Paul said to them: "Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" They answered him: "We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost." "In what then were you baptised?" he asked. They said to him: "In John's baptism." Paul said to them: "John baptised the people with the baptism of penance, saying that they should believe in Him who was to come after him, that is to say, in Jesus Christ." At their request Paul baptised them. He then imposed hands on them; and the Holy Ghost coming down upon them, "they spoke with tongues and prophesied."

For three months Paul spoke boldly in the synagogue concerning the kingdom of God, until the opposition of his enemies forced him to withdraw with his disciples to the school of one Tyrannus. There, for two years, Paul discoursed daily, so that the knowledge of the Christian faith was spread widely around Ephesus. Paul's testimony was confirmed by many wonderful miracles. "Even there were brought from his body to the sick, handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the wicked spirits went out of them."

Now among the Jews were exorcists, who, by calling upon the name of the true God, are thought to have been able sometimes to cast out evil spirits. They even attempted to cast out devils in the name of the Lord Jesus, saying: "I conjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." Among them were the seven sons of Sceva, a chief priest; and when on one occasion they tried thus to cast out a spirit, the spirit said to them: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" Then the possessed man leaped upon them, and overpowered two of them, so that they were fain to escape, naked and wounded from the house. The inhabitants of Ephesus hearing this, were penetrated with the fear of God, "and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified." Many came to Paul confessing their sins, while others brought their books of divination and magic and burnt them. Thus did the work of God triumph.

About this time Paul made known his intention of making a further journey into Greece in obedience to the Holy Spirit. He also added: "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."

Before his departure there arose a violent disturbance against him, the instigator of which was one Demetrius, a silversmith. This man was a maker of silver models of the famous temple of Diana at Ephesus, and employed for that purpose a great many workmen. Now the successful preaching of the Gospel threatened ruin to such as he; wherefore, calling together his workmen and those who followed the same occupation as himself, he thus addressed them: "You men, you know that our gain is by this trade: now you

see and hear that this Paul by persuasion hath drawn away a great multitude, not only at Ephesus, but also throughout all Asia, saying: There are no gods which are made with hands; so that not only is this our craft in danger to be set at naught, but also the temple of great Diana shall be reputed for nothing; yea, and her majesty shall begin to be destroyed whom all Asia and the world worshippeth."

By these words he so succeeded in rousing the fury of his hearers that, as with one voice, they cried out: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Their cry was taken up throughout the whole city, and soon the streets were in the wildest uproar. One man gave out one report, another another; and for two hours without intermission the shout was repeated, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians;" although the greater part of the mob knew not why they were met together.

Fearing mischief, the town-clerk came upon the scene, and by his wisdom and tact so succeeded in calming the people that they quietly dispersed (Acts xix.).

CHAPTER XCVIII

PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY
(*Concluded*)

Soon after the tumult of the silversmiths, Paul took leave of his disciples and set out for Macedonia by way of Troas. He is even thought at this time to have penetrated as far as Illyricum on the Adriatic. At length he came into the southern part of Greece, into Achaia, where, chiefly at Corinth, he abode three months.

Anxious to visit Jerusalem, Paul had intended to sail direct for Syria, when the discovery of a Jewish plot to kill him caused him to return through Macedonia. At Philippi he would appear to have been rejoined by Luke, as the narrative of the Acts is now continued in the first person: "These (Paul's companions) having gone before *us*, waited for *us* at Troas. But *we* sailed from Philippi after the days of the Azymes, and came to them to Troas in five days, where *we* stayed seven days."

Here, while Paul and his disciples were assembled on the first day of the week to break bread, on the eve of his departure, a young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in one of the windows, overcome with sleep as Paul was preaching, fell down from the third storey and was taken up dead. Paul went down to where the youth was lying, and stretching himself over him after the manner of Elias, raised him to life, to the great joy of the young man's friends. He then returned to the upper room, where he "broke bread" and continued discoursing till daybreak, when he took leave of them.

When Paul was come to Miletus, he sent for the ancients of the Church at Ephesus to join him there; and when they arrived he thus touchingly addressed them: "You know from the first day that I came into Asia in what manner I have been with you all this time, serving the Lord with all humility, and with tears, and temp-

tations which befell me by the conspiracies of the Jews; how I have preached to you and taught you publicly, and from house to house. And now I go to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, only that the Holy Ghost in every city witnesseth to me that chains and afflictions wait me there. But I fear none of these things. And now I know that all you shall see my face no more. Take heed then to yourselves and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure ravening wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock. And of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, keeping in memory that for three years I ceased not night and day with tears admonishing every one of you. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, who is able to build up, and to give an inheritance among all the sanctified. I have showed you how, labouring, you ought to support the weak, and to remember the word of the Lord Jesus: It is a more blessed thing to give than to receive."

After he had finished speaking, he fell upon his knees, and prayed with them for what all believed to be the last time. All shed tears, and falling upon his neck they kissed him, and with hearts full of grief and gratitude accompanied him to the ship which was to convey him from their sight. He took the shortest route to Jerusalem in order to be there for the great Feast.

A week was spent at Tyre where Paul met certain disciples who would have dissuaded him from going to Jerusalem in view of the sufferings which they feared awaited him there. But he regarded not their entreaties nor the dangers which everywhere threatened him. "And the days being expired," continues Luke, "departing we went forward, they all bringing us on our way, with their wives and children, till we were out of the city; and kneeling down on the shore, we prayed. And when we had taken leave of one another, we took ship, and they returned home."

Arrived at Caesarea, Paul with his companions took up his abode for several days in the house of Philip, one of the seven deacons. It was while he was staying with Philip that there came to him that same prophet Agabus who had predicted the famine which occurred in the reign of Claudius. As soon as he entered the house, Agabus took Paul's girdle, with which he bound his own feet and hands, saying: "The man whose girdle this is, thus shall the Jews bind him in Jerusalem, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." "And when we wept," writes Luke, "Paul said: What mean you, weeping and afflicting my heart, for I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when we could not persuade him, we ceased, saying: The will of the Lord be done." The little band then proceeded to Jerusalem.

With this concludes Paul's third missionary journey, the duration of which had been about four years (Acts xx., xxi.).

CHAPTER XCIX

PAUL IS APPREHENDED IN THE TEMPLE

PAUL was welcomed with joy by the faithful in Jerusalem, and on the day following his arrival went to have an interview with James, and related to him and to the ancients who were with him what things God had wrought among the Gentiles. They glorified God for this, but said to him: "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law. Now they have heard of thee that thou teachest those Jews among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, nor to walk according to the custom. Do, therefore, what we say to thee: We have four men who have a vow on them; join with them and submit to the legal purifications, and thus shall it be known that these reports are without foundation."

Paul followed this advice. He purified himself, and next day went into the Temple. Some Jews, however, from Asia, when they saw him, laid violent hands upon him, exclaiming: "Men of Israel, help. This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people and the Law, and this place; and moreover hath brought in Gentiles into the Temple, and hath violated this holy place."

Soon the whole city was in an uproar, and a rush was made to the Temple. Unwilling to defile the sacred place with blood, or to have it profaned by the presence of the Gentiles, the people dragged Paul out of the Temple and immediately shut the doors.

Word was at once conveyed to the Roman tribune, Claudius Lysias, that the city was in a turmoil. With a body of soldiers the tribune hurried to the scene of disturbance and succeeded in rescuing Paul. He had him bound in chains and brought into the fort, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Agabus. Seeing Paul borne out of their reach, the people cried out in their rage: "Away with him."

Questioned by the tribune, Paul answered: "I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city, and I beseech thee, suffer me to speak to the people." The request was granted; and Paul, standing upon the steps leading up to the fort, said: "Men brethren, and fathers, hear ye the account which I now give you. I am a Jew, born at Tarsus, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, zealous for the Law, as also all you are this day." He explained to them how he had proved his zeal by persecuting the Christians, to which fact the High Priest and the ancients could bear testimony, and told them the full story of his conversion.

Till he came to where the Lord had bidden him depart from Jerusalem, because the people would not receive his testimony, and go to the Gentiles afar off, they listened to him with attention; but at this point their fury burst out anew. "Away with such a

one from the earth," they cried, " for it is not fit that he should live." Unable to vent their wrath in a more effectual way, they threw dust into the air, and threw off their garments to show themselves ready to stone him."

Lysias, believing that Paul must have been guilty of some great offence to cause such a tumult, gave orders for him to be bound, scourged, and tortured. Paul suffered himself to be secured with thongs; but when they were about to scourge him, he asked: " Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman and uncondemned?" The centurion in alarm hurried away to the tribune and said: " What art thou about to do, for this man is a Roman citizen?"

The tribune came in all haste to inquire if he were indeed a Roman citizen, and how he had received his citizenship. To this Paul answered: " I was born so." The tribune was now in fear, because he had caused Paul to be bound; for the same law which forbade a Roman citizen to be scourged also forbade him to be bound. The next day he had the chief priest and the Sanhedrim called together, and set Paul before them (xxi., xxii.).

CHAPTER C

PLOT AGAINST PAUL'S LIFE

The Council was composed both of Pharisees and Sadducees, the latter of whom denied the doctrine of the resurrection, while the former affirmed it, a circumstance which Paul turned to good account. " Men brethren," he began, " I have conversed with an entire good conscience before God until this present day. I am a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." His declaring himself in favour of the belief in the resurrection of the dead angered the Sadducees, but won favour with the Pharisees. A dissension at once arose between the two parties, some of the Pharisees exclaiming: " We find no evil in this man." So great was the clamour which arose that the tribune, fearing lest Paul should be torn to pieces, ordered a guard of soldiers to bring him back to the castle for safety.

The following night our Lord appeared to his Apostle and said: " Be constant; for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou also bear witness in Rome."

The morning had no sooner dawned than some forty Jews, to please the Sadducees, bound themselves by oath to kill Paul. They swore that they would neither eat nor drink till they had carried out their purpose.

Their plan, however, failed. The son of Paul's sister, hearing of the plot against his uncle, carried the information to the castle. Paul listened to his story; then calling to him one of the centurions, he said: " Bring this young man to the tribune, for he hath something to tell him." The tribune listened with attention and surprise to the young man's account of the plot, and, charging him to tell these

things to no man, dismissed him. He then called two centurions and said: "Make ready two hundred soldiers, that they may go as far as Caesarea, together with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen, from the third hour of the night. And bring Paul safe to Felix the governor."

The next morning saw Paul safe at Antipatris, from which place the foot-soldiers had been commanded to return, leaving the cavalry alone to convey him to Caesarea. This they succeeded in doing the same day. Felix promised to hear Paul as soon as his accusers should arrive, and kept him in custody in Herod's judgment hall (Acts xxiii.).

CHAPTER CI

PAUL BEFORE FELIX, THE ROMAN GOVERNOR

FIVE days after Paul's arrival at Caesarea there came thither the High Priest with some of the ancients, bringing with them one Tertullus, an orator, whom the Jews had engaged to put their case before the Roman Governor, Felix. Paul being called, Tertullus brought many accusations against him; and after the Jews had expressed their assent to the charges adduced, Paul spoke thus in his own defence:

"They cannot prove unto thee the things whereof they now accuse me. But this I confess to thee that, according to the way which they call a heresy, so do I serve my God, believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets, having hope in God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection of the just and the unjust. And herein do I endeavour to have always a conscience without offence towards God and towards men. Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings, and vows, during which time they found me purified in the Temple, neither with a crowd nor with tumult." He, moreover, pointed out that the Jews of Asia who had found him in the Temple were not present, as they ought to have been if they had any accusation to make against him.

Felix saw that there was no case against the Apostle. He also knew from a letter from Lysias that Paul and the Christians were not guilty of an offence against Caesar, but that all that was alleged against them related to the Jewish Law. He accordingly postponed the further hearing of the case till the arrival of Lysias in Caesarea, and entrusted Paul to the charge of a centurion, with orders that he should be treated with great leniency, and that his friends should have free access to him.

A few days afterwards, Drusilla, the adulterous consort of Felix, and a Jewess by birth, came to Caesarea. Both she and Felix were desirous of hearing Paul speak of "the faith which is in Jesus Christ," and summoned him before them. But when the Apostle spoke of the terrible judgment that awaited all such as lived in injustice and impurity, Felix trembled and said: "For this time go thy way; but at a convenient time I will send for thee."

He still kept Paul a prisoner and often conversed with him, but with the sole motive of extracting from him a bribe as the price of his release. Two years afterwards Felix was replaced by Festus; yet, to win favour with the Jews, he left Paul a prisoner at Caesarea (Acts xxiv.).

CHAPTER CII

PAUL APPEALS TO CAESAR

THREE days after his arrival at Caesarea, Festus went up to Jerusalem. The Jews requested him to send Paul for trial to Jerusalem, although their only aim was to waylay and kill him. Festus refused their request and ordered Paul's accusers to accompany him to Caesarea, to which place it was his intention to return in a few days. The day after his return, Festus commanded Paul to be brought before him, when, to the charges preferred against him by the Jews, Paul answered: "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the Temple, nor against Caesar, have I offended in anything."

Wishing to please the Jews, Festus asked: "Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me?" Paul answered: "I stand at Caesar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no injury, as thou very well knowest. If there be nothing of these things whereof they accuse me, no man can deliver me to them: I appeal to Caesar." Then Festus, having conferred with the Council, said: "Thou hast appealed to Caesar, to Caesar shalt thou go."

A few days after this there came to Caesarea King Agrippa and his sister Bernice to offer their congratulations to the new governor. Festus mentioned to them the case of Paul, whereupon they expressed a wish to see and hear him. Chained to the soldier who guarded him, Paul was brought before them, and being bidden by Agrippa to speak for himself, he said: "I think myself happy, O King Agrippa, that I am come to answer for myself this day before thee concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, especially as thou knowest all, both customs and questions, which are among the Jews." He then went on to relate the story of his past life, and all the circumstances connected with his conversion. He called attention to the hope of the promise which God made to their fathers, the hope of a Deliverer who was to conquer death, the fulfilment of which promise he recognised in Jesus of Nazareth, whose resurrection he proclaimed to be the pledge of a new and immortal life. He spoke of the commission which our Lord gave him to the nations, "to open their eyes, that they might be converted from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and a lot among the saints by the faith that was in Him." Wherefore, he added, "I was not incredulous to the heavenly vision."

He was interrupted by Festus exclaiming: "Paul, thou art beside

thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." "No," replied Paul, "I am not mad, most excellent Festus; but I speak words of truth and sobriety; for the king knoweth of these things, to whom also I speak with confidence. Believest thou the Prophets, O King Agrippa? I know that thou believest." Agrippa answered: "In a little thou persuadest me to become a Christian." "I would to God," said Paul, "that both in little and in much not only thou, but all that hear me this day, should become such as I also am, except these chains."

At this point Agrippa and the governor, with their company, conferred together, and came to the conclusion that Paul had done nothing which merited death or imprisonment. Agrippa remarked: "This man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Caesar." But such an appeal could not be withdrawn (Acts xxv., xxvi.).

CHAPTER CIII

PAUL'S VOYAGE TO ROME—HE IS SHIPWRECKED

After a short time Paul was handed over, together with other prisoners, to the care of Julius, a centurion, who had orders to conduct them to Rome. The ship in which they sailed from Caesarea was a coasting vessel of Adramyttium, a town situated over against the island of Lemnos. Paul was comforted by having in his company Luke and his devoted fellow-traveller, Aristarchus of Thessalonica, who had accompanied him from Macedonia, and who was to share his imprisonment at Rome. Luke gives us a vivid description of the voyage with all its details:

We weighed anchor from Caesarea, and on the following day touched at Sidon, where Paul was permitted to visit his friends.

When we launched again from Sidon, we sailed under the coast of Cyprus and came to Myra, where the centurion found an Alexandrian corn-ship sailing for Italy, and put us aboard her.

When for many days we had sailed slowly as far as Gnidus, we were compelled by the wind to run down to Crete; and we reached with much difficulty the harbour of Good Havens, where we remained a long time. Paul now spoke words of comfort and of advice, saying: "Ye men, I see the voyage begins to be with danger, and much damage, not only of the lading and the ship, but also of our lives." But the pilot and the master of the ship decided to make for Phenice and pass the winter there.

Favoured by a gentle breeze they weighed anchor, when a violent wind from the north-east, called Euroclydon, swept down upon us and rendered the ship unmanageable. Giving up the ship to the winds, we were driven before the gale. While we were running under the island of Cauda, the sailors had much difficulty in hoisting the boat on board. This done, they undergirded the ship by passing strong cables and chains round the hull that she might not be torn asunder; and afraid lest they should drift into the quicksands, or

the Great Syrtis off the coast of Africa, they lowered the sail-yard, and so were driven before the wind. The next day, for the purpose of lightening the ship, they threw overboard all that could be spared. For many days now neither the sun nor the stars appeared to give us an idea of our position; and as the storm continued to rage, all hopes of safety were abandoned. But Paul spoke words of good cheer, and told them that, though the ship was doomed to be lost, every man's life would be saved.

On the fourteenth night after our departure from Cauda, as we were sailing in the Adria, the sailors deemed that they discovered some country, and proceeded to take the soundings. They found that we were in twenty fathoms of water, which soon diminished to fifteen. Then, fearing lest we should be driven upon the rocks, they cast four anchors from the stern, and wished for the day. The sailors tried to escape from the ship; but Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers: "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." At once the soldiers cut the ropes by which the boat was being lowered, and allowed it to fall into the sea and drift away in the darkness.

There were altogether two hundred and seventy-six souls; and as soon as the day began to break, Paul again tried to cheer his fellow-voyagers, saying: "This is the fourteenth day that you have waited and continued fasting; wherefore I pray you to take some food for your health's sake; for there shall not a hair of the head of any of you perish." Having spoken thus, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of them all, began to eat. They were all of better cheer, and they also took some food.

At first we did not recognise what land it was over against which we had cast anchor; but when we saw what appeared to be a creek, it was resolved, if possible, to run the ship into it, and try to beach her. Fearing that their prisoners might try to escape, the soldiers wished to kill them on the spot; but the centurion, anxious to save Paul, prevented them, and gave orders that those who were able to swim should first plunge into the sea and make for the land, while the rest, by making use of planks and portions of the wreck, followed after. And so it came to pass that every soul got safe to land (Acts xxvii.).

CHAPTER CIV

PAUL IN MALTA—ARRIVAL AT ROME

When we had escaped, continues Luke, we knew that the island was called Melita (*Malta*). The inhabitants showed us no small courtesy, for having kindled a fire because of the rain and the cold, they afforded us what comfort they could. Paul was in the act of placing a bundle of sticks on the fire when a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened on his hand. The natives at first thought he was a murderer whom vengeance would not suffer to live, although he had escaped the sea; but when he shook off the venomous reptile

into the flames without harm to himself, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

Now Publius, the chief man of the island, welcomed us, and for three days entertained us courteously, a kindness which Paul returned by miraculously healing his father, who was suffering from a fever and dysentery. The fame of this miracle spread throughout the island, so that all who had diseases came and were healed. On this account the people paid us many honours, and when we were to set sail, loaded us with such things as were necessary.

After a delay of three months Julius placed us on board a ship from Alexandria that had wintered in the island, a ship whose sign was the *Castors*. We sailed first to Syracuse in Sicily, thence to Regium, and finally to Puteoli, at which port the Alexandrian cornships discharged their cargoes. News of our arrival having reached Rome, many of the brethren came to meet us at *Appii-Forum* and the *Three Taverns;* and when Paul saw them, " he gave thanks to God, and took courage."

On their arrival in Rome, Paul, guarded by a soldier to whom he was chained, was allowed to dwell in his own hired house, where, after three days, he assembled the principal Jews then to be found in Rome. After he had explained to them the motives which had compelled him to appeal to Caesar, he added: " For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." They said to him: " We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest; for as concerning this sect (*the Christians*), we know that it is everywhere contradicted."

A day having been set apart for hearing him, the Jews came in great numbers to his lodging, and from morning till evening he preached to them, expounding to them the Gospel. Upon the greater number, however, his words were lost; and, disputing among themselves, they went their way.

For two years Paul remained a prisoner, as it was necessary for a prosecution that the accusers should attend in person. He remained in his own hired lodgings, and was permitted to receive all who came to him. He preached the Kingdom of God, " teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with confidence " (Acts xxviii.).

Here ends the history of St. Paul, as contained in the Acts. From the testimony of certain ancient writers we learn that, after an imprisonment of two years, his trial came on and resulted in his being set at liberty. Before long, however, he was arrested and again carried a prisoner to Rome, where he was now treated as a criminal. Expecting soon to be put to death, we find him writing to Timothy: " I am even now ready to be sacrificed; and the time of my dissolution is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me at that day " (2 Tim. iv. 6-8).

Tradition has it that in the year A.D. 67 he and St. Peter suffered martyrdom under Nero. St. Paul, on account of his being a Roman

citizen, was beheaded; and during the same persecution St. Peter was crucified in Rome with his head downwards. He chose to suffer thus, deeming himself unworthy to die as his Divine Master had died before him.

APPENDIX

I. THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis	Canticle of Canticles	
Exodus	Wisdom	
Leviticus	Ecclesiasticus	
Numbers	*Isaias	* The four Greater Prophets
Deuteronomy	*Jeremias	
Josue	Lamentations	
Judges	Baruch	
Ruth	*Ezechiel	
1 Kings (or 1 Samuel)	*Daniel	
2 Kings (or 2 Samuel)	Osee	The twelve Minor Prophets.
3 Kings (or 1 Kings)	Joel	
4 Kings (or 2 Kings)	Amos	
1 Paralipomenon (or 1 Chronicles)	Abdias	
2 Paralipomenon (or 2 Chronicles)	Jonas	
1 Esdras	Micheas	
2 Esdras (or Nehemias)	Nahum	
Tobias	Habacuc	
Judith	Sophonias	
Esther	Aggeus	
Job	Zacharias	
Psalms	Malachias	
Proverbs	1 Machabees	
Ecclesiastes	2 Machabees	

II. THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Besides the four *Gospels* of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John, which contain the history of Christ, and the *Acts of the Apostles*, written also by St. Luke, which give us the history of the infant Church, we have the *Epistles of the Apostles* and the *Apocalypse* of St. John.

The Order of the Twenty-Seven Books

St. Matthew
St. Mark
St. Luke
St. John
The Acts
St. Paul to the Romans
" " Corinthians (1)
" " Corinthians (2)
" " Galatians
" " Ephesians
" " Philippians
" " Colossians
" " Thessalonians (1)
" " Thessalonians (2)
" " Timothy (1)
" " Timothy (2)
St. Paul to Titus
" " Philemon
" " the Hebrews

and the general or Catholic Epistles of

St. James
St. Peter (1)
St. Peter (2)
St. John (1)
St. John (2)
St. John (3)
St. Jude
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